THE FOE OF COMPROMISE

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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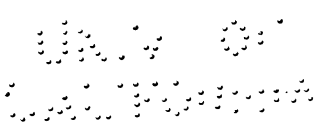
A History of the United States from the End of the Civil War.

THE FOE OF COMPROMISE

AND OTHER ESSAYS

BY

WILLIAM GARROTT BROWN



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To F. G. C. AND J. C. B.

"Count, are we feeble or few? Hear, is our speech so rude?
Look, are we poor in the land? Judge, are we men of The Blood?"

—RUDYARD KIPLING, *Song of the Sons.*

PREFATORY NOTE

THE author is indebted to the editor and the publishers of *The Atlantic Monthly* for permission to republish the first three essays in this volume. The first also appeared in *The Fortnightly Review*. None of the three is greatly changed from its original form. The fourth has grown out of an address which was given before the Harvard Memorial Society in December, 1901.

TRINITY PARK, DURHAM, N.C.,
9 October, 1903.

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THE FOE OF COMPROMISE

"*January* 9th, 1844.

"I was walking the other morning with Waldo Emerson in Concord, and I told him I thought the soul's serenity was at best nothing more than resignation to what could not be helped. He answered, 'Oh, no; not resignation, — aspiration is the soul's true state! What have we knees for, what have we hands for? Peace is *victory!*'"

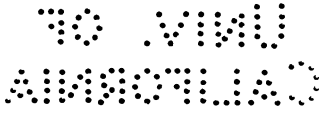
— *From the Letters of Mrs. Samuel Ripley.*

THE FOE OF COMPROMISE

THE case for compromise was never put better, perhaps, than it was by moderate American statesmen after the great political compromise of 1850. That adjustment, they said, had saved the Union; and they pointed out to the defeated radicals that the noblest politics are but a compromise. The Union itself, they declared, is a compromise; so is the Constitution, and all social life, and the harmony of the entire universe. With sincere conviction and a genuine fervor they dilated on the blessings we had won by being reasonable. Had we not won peace itself? "With what instantaneous and mighty charm," cried Rufus Choate, their orator, the measures of compromise "calmed the madness and anxiety of the hour!" And not peace alone, but love. "How, in a moment, the interrupted and parted currents of fraternal feeling reunited!"

Surely, they were right. The analogy of nature, common sense, the experience of mankind, crystallized in proverbs, and all the dignified and honored usage of our human societies ranged themselves on their side. And yet, we did not rest in the peace which they had made. Their contemporary, Garrison, the abolitionist, must have known that all these things were against him; he must have felt how harshly the strife he brought into our Republic of welfare and opportunity broke in upon the soft music which ears like Choate's were harking for. Nevertheless, he went on: and soon there was war and death and mourning in the land. Some said that the outcome proved compromise a failure; more said, it was the fault of Garrison and of the other extremists on both sides. There was peace again, at last: a sure peace for the Republic; surer and deeper for some hundreds of thousands of young men in blue and gray uniforms, mourned a while by their young wives and sweethearts, — mourned without ceasing by dim-eyed mothers. The end of compromise and the end of warfare were the same.

And yet, not quite the same; for there is



peace, and peace. Which, one wonders, is that peace for which mankind, in all lands, all languages, to all their gods, forever pray? Which is that peace which we of Christian breeding have been taught to pray for? "The Lord bless us and keep us, the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us, the Lord lift up his countenance upon us, and give us peace, now and for evermore." Is it the peace men win by bargaining with circumstance, by huckstering with life? Or is it that peace for which they also strive who will not stop to parley, but shout, like the young Octavius, "To the field!" Is it the peace of compromise? Or is it some other peace which shall come at last out of war and conflict, out of "confused noises and garments rolled in blood"?

There is no other question so universal or so perpetual as this — for communities or for men. Civilizations, as well as individual lives, diverge with this divergence of the paths of peace. Continents are less divided by the seas than by this disparity of aspiration in the peoples that inhabit them. Asia were

Europe, Europe, America, if in Occident and Orient men were like-hearted in their prayers for peace. Like they are — all men are like — in those few simple, primal hungerings and thirstings which deny them peace. We shall not go far wrong if we say that bread, and work and play, and love symbolize all our wants, for the here and the hereafter. To have these, and have them rightly and of right, is peace; else, there is no peace. Few of us, men or communities, but can have them, and have them all — in a measure, and by compromise.

Much has been said concerning the bounds of compromise; but they who have spoken and written to the best purpose on this theme have been students of communities, of society. They have reasoned by less or more concerning the greater and the lesser utilities, and they have used the method of science. That, no doubt, was a right point of view, and a right method, for that aspect of the subject. Communities of men are studied most profitably as one studies nature. Their characteristics may be observed and recorded like natural phenomena. The law of their growth and their decay is a natural

law. The laws they make, and the higher law, are only for individuals. The student of society may therefore reason about the bounds of compromise in a way not open to the venturesome searcher of the hearts of men.

But much of our most individual experience comes of our membership in communities; and by that bridge I wish to pass from the great matter which Garrison and Choate debated to a still greater matter: from the theme of Mr. John Morley's well-known essay to a theme which is oftener approached in poetry than in such plain prose as this I use; from compromise in the conflict between the greater and the lesser utilities in civilization to compromise in the long striving of our human souls for peace. More particularly, I wish, if it be possible, to work my way to a clearer understanding — clearer than any I find in books, or in the talk of other men — of what that is which forever rises up in men, as men like Garrison and Morley and the radicals of other times have risen up in all societies, to fight with compromise, whatever form it takes. For my notion is, that there is nothing in us, nothing in the human spirit,

more curious and noteworthy than the strange impulse to fight at once with reason and desire.

But passing thus from compromise in the affairs of whole communities, whole societies, to compromise in individual lives, even though we begin with individuals as members of societies, with compromise in patriotism, we make, in truth, a great transition. Our purpose is no longer what Mr. Morley's was in that finely scrupulous inquiry of his into the laws of the warfare with error; nor can we use his method. We cannot simply take an inventory of the gains and losses, reckoned by more or less, which will ensue to the individual from acquiescence and adjustment, on the one hand, or from resolute adherence to an ideal, on the other hand, or from some middle course. For we have no standard of values in the life of the individual. We can hope for little more than an imperfect view of the conflict in a man's own breast, a dim observation of the forces which contend there for the mastery of his nature.

To begin, then, with compromise in patriotism, there is, first of all, the man's own peculiar, personal vision and outlook when he thinks of

his country. That, doubtless, is primarily geographical; it began with the maps at school. But an infinite number of facts, learned he knows not when, of observations made he knows not where, and of impressions taken he knows not how — in travel, reading, conversation — have gradually been added, changing and enlarging his conception, until the whole has taken in his thought a mixed, composite character which it is far beyond the power of language to convey. Parts of the whole will seem to him wrong, unfit, out of joint with the rest. Certain things he disapproves: not merely disapproves, but hates. Other things, and certain aspects of the whole, he approves: not merely approves, but loves. There are, therefore, attractions and repulsions in the state, and these, far more than any reasoning of his about the state, will determine his ideal. A man's ideal in patriotism — his ideal of that which he himself sees when he says, "My country" — is very far indeed from being an affair of the intellect alone. It is compact of aspiration and desire.

But no other man's conception of the state, of society, no other man's vision and outlook, is

ever quite the same; nor is there, in any other man, quite the same set of desires and aspirations that have to do with the state. The falling short of one's ideal is, therefore, inevitable; but loyalty to it is always possible, and a persistent willing and striving toward it. What is that which in one man keeps alive his whole desire, his undiminished aspiration, while in another man, after a brief struggle, a faint beating of its wings, it yields to necessity, to circumstance?

Edmund Burke, I fancy, will serve us best for an instance of what I mean in patriotism. The warfare between his selfish interests and his attachments, many of them high and tender, on the one hand, and what, for want of a better word, we may call his ideal, on the other, is revealed in his writings and speeches as similar inner conflicts seldom are; for of all great writers and speakers of the English tongue who have also been statesmen, no other, I think, has ever made so plain to us both his inner vision and reflection of society and his purposes, desires, and aspirations for society. Now Burke's ideal of the state was, unquestionably, more

like Choate's than Garrison's. His disposition was hopeful, even sanguine. His favorite conceptions, though sublime, were not ethereal. The order of things physical and the harmony of the actual universe were pleasing to him. Adjustments did not seem to him shameful. On the contrary, compromise, arrangement, correlation, entered largely into his scheme. He could contemplate with enthusiasm an empire of checks and balances, of liberty and law, of force and restraint. That all should be practical was thus of the essence of his ideal.

But if his ideal was an ideal of compromise, no man ever had a loftier scorn of any compromise with his ideal. Do but consider his course in the two great crises of his times, — when America broke with the Empire, and when France broke with the past. It is plain that Burke saw, throughout the whole controversy with America, authority enlarging itself at the expense of liberty, — pressing in, as it were, upon the sphere and function of liberty in his ideal scheme of the Empire. And how he pleaded the cause of liberty thus outraged! With what an intimate sense of it as principle and as im-

pulse he pursued it through the history of the colonies! No man could speak as he spoke from a mere conviction. A thing he loved had been endangered. It was as if time and change had set upon some landscape familiar to his eyes from boyhood, and threatened to alter it beyond his recognition. When the ministry, with a weak obstinacy, would have struck down the free spirit of a new continent, it struck at something that was vital and sensitive in Burke's own nature. It was at bottom a sort of self-assertion, an instinct of self-preservation, that made him turn upon authority as he did. It was a lifting of his own head, a deep and passionate breathing in of the boon air about him, — this splendid loyalty to liberty endangered, when in truth liberty was not, to him, the one central and vital principle of society.

On the contrary, it was in essence the same self-assertion which he made when the revolutionists of France, through a riotous overgrowth and overreaching of liberty, endangered what was equally dear to him in his ideal of the social order. His opulent imagination had decked authority with the richest trappings,

graced it with noble attitudes and poses, and softened its harsh outlines with a tender reverence. Royalty was to him no mere utilitarian device, adapted to a particular function in the state; it was the outgrowth, and the right symbolical expression, of a deep and noble human instinct. If one said, "The King," Burke saw, with a vision denied to most of us, the long procession of the monarchs of mankind: rich, barbaric Eastern pageants of enthronement; gestures of command, and high serious faces of authority; arms of power outstretched with dooms or mercies; sweet and moving episodes of princely gentleness, and of all our common sorrows worn, in proud silence, like a hair shirt underneath the purple. He saw the peoples of the earth, through all the centuries, turning again and again, from whatever hard adventures of facing life unruled, to lean upon authority and fortify themselves with thrones and coronations. All this and more was passionate in his deep contempt and his hurt anger at the ignorant, impious assault of France on his ideal. A regicide peace with France was to him what an unjust war with America had been. It was a

marring and distortion of that image of society which he wore upon his heart.

So much is clear, I think, from what Burke wrote and spoke. The like is only less clear in the utterances and in the lives of other men who have had a truly passionate feeling for the state, for society. Such men are better known to us, perhaps, than any other class. It may be well, therefore, to keep this particular class of men in mind, and those ideals which grow in us from our membership in communities, while we attempt some further insight into the nature of that in the human spirit which fights with compromise.

We must, I think, take account of something deeper and more hidden than the ideal itself. The question is not of what that may happen to be, but of adherence to it, — of the kind and degree of loyalty. In every case of change in the social order we are moderate or extreme according to the readiness with which we yield to necessity, or to some less imperative consideration, any part of our ideal. All such changes are, in fact, of the nature of a victory either of liberty over authority or of authority

over liberty. The conflict inside of us may be set forth in the same terms, though the analogy will not be easy to hold. It is, one might say, the voice of authority, at once menacing and protecting, which commends to us accommodation, moderation, acquiescence. It is the voice of the dreadful spirit of Liberty that whips our spirits into defiance. There is a question of monarchy or democracy in our inner state. These citizen desires and aspirations of ours — wild-eyed, fierce denizens of our spiritual Rue Saint Antoines, pale, visionary enthusiasts of the Latin Quarters of our souls — shall we repress and feed them, or shall we give them rein to triumph — and to starve? These dear, child-like impulses — shall we loose them for their play, or shall we house and guard them with a wise and paternal discretion? For a man's desires are indeed as the very children of his soul, and he loves them with a parent's love. Compromise, I think, is a sort of bourgeois paternalism of one's aspirations, careful of health and food, frankly concerned with the welfare of the offspring, while the other sort of fatherhood is more concerned with the high nature and the

noble function of its princeling brood. Thus one man will, as it were, coarsen or cheapen his soul's appetites to that they feed on, — mercifully restrain them, and hold them back from the joust with circumstance, — while another man will let them hunger, even to a death in the desert, if heaven send not down the manna which they crave. He will not leash them or hold them back, but with a kinglier love bids them forth to the wars.

But these analogies, for all I know, may make rather for confusion than for clearness. My own conception is not of a quality and habit of certain natures and of an unlike quality and habit of other natures. It is, rather, of a force, a power, a sort of demon, in us all, which dwells in the deeps beneath our consciousness, whence in some of us it rises up often, and exercises a well-nigh constant dominance, while in others it comes up seldom, or is so foundered with the bread of compromise, so couched and cushioned with the ease of acquiescence, that it lies in a sleep or torpor, and only now and then stirs and mutters in its sleep. Until it appears, it is undiscernible. While it is silent, the man

is altogether amenable to reason, pliant to circumstance. But when it rises up, out of the nothingness within, the man will know it for his very inmost self. Ideal is not its name, for ideals are many, and they change; the thing I mean is one and constant. It is, rather, the champion and tutelary god of all ideals. Nor is it aspiration, but rather the monitor that bids us always aspire, and largely. Nor is it desire, but rather a royal parent to desires. There is, in fact, no name for the thing I mean. Let us call it merely the foe — the hidden foe — of compromise.

Definition and description are inadequate, impossible. To attain any distinct sense of the thing I mean, each of us must endeavor to recall for himself its appearances in his inner life. But the common affair, and a man's share in the life of a community, though it serve for clearness in illustration, is no doubt too small a part of all but a few individual lives to afford, for most of us, any very vivid and memorable instances of the rising up within ourselves of this concealed and dreadful power. We must turn, rather, to those experiences in which we

singly face the universe without; and each of us must determine for himself what its part has been in his own struggle for the things which should satisfy his primal wants and give him peace.

Now the strife for bread, so one might think, is but a poor occasion for any stirring of the foe of compromise. Nevertheless, it is not always unmindful even of that aspiration. It will teach a man, only too clearly, before he is far progressed along the road to comfort and to luxury, that there are infinite degrees of material welfare, and grades and hierarchies of our merely physical appetites. That characteristic American boast of having or of buying always "the best" was made first of things material—of food and drink, of shelter, and of raiment. Keen and even sordid money-getters though we are, extravagance is, none the less, a national characteristic. Quite probably, there are more of us who decline to regulate and moderate our appetency for the good things of the physical life, from economy or from temperance or from any other of the considerations that make for moderate living, than there are in any other country;

and doubtless compromise is oftener scorned among us in this than in any other connection. The kingly aspiration of the democrat is least often restrained when the question is of the food that is fit for a king, of purple and fine linen, of chariots and horses. To live thus magnificently with the body, or, obeying the next whole impulse, to disregard the body altogether, as a thing shamed by its ignoble food and housing — these are the two extremes.

In such concerns the foe of compromise contradicts the proverbs. "No bread is better than half a loaf" is its exhortation concerning the immediate wants of the body. "Either riches or poverty" is its word to our hunger of possession. Nor is its lordship of our natures in respect of these material desires an entirely low sort of dominance, or the mere household drudgery of its kingship. There is a nobleness of the flesh, a fineness of the clay, which is little short of essential to any constant habit of nobleness or fineness in men's natures. A whole and integral character is, I think, impossible, without a fit incarnation. Fulness and freedom even in spiritual experiences are unattainable without

a free access to the life of nature and a full relish of all bodily delights. Here, especially, — though the comparison will serve in other connections also, — the real nature of the foe of compromise may be well suggested by calling to mind the attitude, in certain moods, of that rare type we call a gentleman; or perhaps "fine gentleman" would be the better term. I mean, the sort of human being who never questions his right to the earth and its fulness, and whose right, for that reason, may even go unchallenged by other men. Such a man will choke on common food. He is athirst if he drink not of the best vintage; cabined, anywhere but in a palace; naked, if his raiment be not of the costliest stuffs. For all his senses he will demand always "the best." That denied, he will rather bear an utter abstinence than stoop to any landlord's, tailor's, tapster's makeshift for his comfort. Your true "fine gentleman," if he be shut out from the palace and the king's table, will oftener be found, like Lear, on the storm-swept moor than in the ale-house.

The immanence and the power of the foe

of compromise will thus be plain to many of us if we go no deeper into our inner experience than to take account of our struggle for material things — our graspings and renunciations. But the part it plays is more important, its power is greater, when the question is of a man's work.

Now I think that as a matter of fact a man's ideal of work grows in his breast as I have thought that Burke's ideal of the social order grew in him. There is in every man a reflection of life, a vision and a sense of life, which he has got from observation and experience. It is not constant, but grows and changes; and it is never quite the same in any two human beings. There is also in every man an inner vision and sense of himself in the midst of life; of himself projected into life; of his single energy transforming somewhat, or conserving somewhat, of that he sees. The ideal of life is due to the attractions and repulsions of life as he sees it. The ideal of work is a part of the ideal of life. Neither is the result of conscious reasoning or willing. They are thrust up from deeps the reason never sounded.

They summon from a height the will has never mounted.

Of necessity, the ideal of work is unattainable. Save in very rare and fortunate cases, it will not be straitened by any restraining sense of the limitations of one's strength, or correspond at all to one's actual talents and endowments. It will seldom, in any case, fall short of dignity and grace and power. Quite probably, it has taken its shape from the accidental direction of the man's first curiosity concerning life, or from the figures of men, enlarged to the eyes of inexperience, which chance may have erected on his earliest horizons. The hue and color of it may be traceable to the atmosphere of his childhood; very likely, it will have a general character of achievement or of sacrifice according to the preponderance of lights or of shadows on the landscape of his youth. In all cases, however, and at all times, it will relate itself to all of life he sees. That he should ever realize it, in any of its stages of growth and change, is, of course, inconceivable.

One might almost say that the degree of

success which a man has in his work, considered thus as a striving toward a right place and a full share in life, is the measure of his facility in compromise. What is said of modern as contrasted with ancient art — that it can only suggest, and never can realize or achieve — is true of all uncompromising work. When work can be measured at all with reasonable tests and standards, there has been concession and adjustment. The demon within has slept. Nor is it any more true in this than in any other connection that the tender of compromise is ever made once for all. That notion of a crisis which once for all determines a man's career, and puts an end to hesitating and debating, is a creation of the dramatic instinct. Story-tellers and playwrights have so constantly resorted to the fancy that it is become a habit of our thought, but experience is forever belying it. Crises, no doubt, there are; as when, in his youth, a man may sometimes choose, with a reasonable forecast of the future, what particular training or apprenticeship he will undergo, and thereby effectively resolve to keep a certain sort of

career possible and forego entirely all other sorts. But the struggle toward his ideal is visible rather in the varying quality of his work than in any choice of tasks. And the struggle, if he do not yield, will be constant, it will grow ever more and more desperate.

For the sense of his littleness and weakness will grow upon him day by day; and day by day life will enlarge in his vision of it; day by day the impossibility of his ideal will be more manifest. The ideal itself, if he do not, by some positive effort, keep it clear, will grow fainter and fainter. He will also understand better what he foregoes pursuing it, as experience and the widening reach of his observation make him more and more aware, as by the lifting of a mist, of what there is to be won from life by acquiescence and arrangement. The lessening years before him will admonish him to an economy of his energy, and sharpen his desires with fear. Striving toward an ideal, however it may, in point of fact, enisle and separate him from the actual life about him, means, for the man himself, an ever keener sense, an ever widening

vision, of the entire front of things without. He is inevitably set upon the aspiration to completeness. He must — so the relentless power within commands him — he *must* forever strain himself to see and sense life whole.

What that straining is to see and sense the whole of life none know, I think, but they that have this devil. Such have been the men — the Amiels and Obermanns — who would have withdrawn from life to the very end of seeing it entire. There is, indeed, a trick, like the trick of wine, to do this without pain: to make even of a wide vision and keen sense of life a soothing entertainment of the soul. This is that leaning and loafing which Walt Whitman loved. It is, perhaps, merely the saying to one's self that seeing is having, as when a child, by the easy largess of its nurse, is made possessor of the moon. But this sort of fireside travel, and society in solitude, and rubbing of one's hands over a Barmecide feast, is of the essence of compromise. There is, for mortal eyes, no true seeing without hungering and thirsting. For no such placid observation does the demon within a man drive

him up to the high place. There are few worse agonies than this of straining to see life whole.

A very common experience may serve to make my meaning clearer, and to show also how constant is the tender of compromise. You have been, let us say, in some distinguished company, where notable men and high-bred women were joined together in some fine exercise of intelligence and sympathy; where the speech was large, and of large things; where noble music, perhaps, and lights, and graceful courtesies, and rich dress and equipage, invested, for a time, the mere ordinary movements and uses of our human bodies with a great and impressive dignity. And thence you pass into some lesser, humbler company, of no extraordinary interest and quite devoid of charm. Now to keep in mind the fine company, the great occasion, the higher and statelier way of living, is longing and regret. It is far more comfortable, and with effort it is possible, to occupy yourself with the lesser company, the lesser interest; to be conscious of that you have in a way to

exclude the troublesome thought of that you have not.

That will be the effort, it is the instinct, in every such case, of natures reconciled and wonted to compromise. None of us, in fact, but learns, after a while, how the mind can be its own place. That sort of "philosophy" is so common that a man can say that he is philosophical, or that he has philosophy, meaning merely that he knows how to decline upon small things and be content with a little share of life, and run no risk of being thought to boast. But there is that in many of us — I think it is in us all in our youth — which cries us shame for such a venal practice of oblivion. Philosophy, in this use of it, wears, to certain of our moods, a mean and commercial aspect; it has a veterinarian quality. The foe of compromise will have none of it, but will forever, while we are in the midst of little things, force our minds back to the great things we have known, and press upon us, in the very hour when we sink down in failure, the agonizing sense of "that obstreperous joy success would bring." The measure of its

power over any man is not in the strength of his sword-arm while he fights. It is, rather, in the silent answer he makes with his eyes to such as remind him, after the battle, that this or that of honor or of ease is left to him, though the battle, indeed, is lost.

And it is of his lost battles that a man must think if he would clearly understand why that longing and straining after life, which is an inevitable experience if he is set against compromise, is so great a pain. It is, I think, in times of defeat, of deprivation, that the sense of life is keenest, the vision widest. It is longing and not having, desire and not fulfilment, hunger and not repletion, that quicken most the apprehensions. Possession, ease, security, assurance, — these are not the moods in which a man is intensely aware of things outside himself. But if he be thrust forth from the house of his toil, barred from the visionary mansion of his hope, let loose to wander to and fro on some highway or city street of life, where beggars cry their sores, all that interior comfort he has lost, and all that unhoused misery he encounters, will find their

right place and perspective in his tingling thought. All the comfortable postulates of our means-and-end existence, all the merciful conventions which screen us from the unpleasant cognizance of naked truths, and the whole habit of assumption, fall away from the vanquished. As no man learns the depth of his own love until some absence or estrangement comes, so only he who feels himself somehow shut out from any right, fit part in the world's work and play can ever learn how great and dreadful is his own hunger for this life. Only he, and he only if the foe of compromise be strong within him, will ever know the uttermost craving of the flesh, or the mind's agony of farthest outreach, or the fierce surging of the heart's desire.

Stripped of his pride, quickened with his hurt, such a man will bare his quivering soul to life. Suns rise and mount and set in single moments of his hurrying thought — and each day scornful for its wasted hours, that might be charged with high activities or rapturous with keen delights. Nature, with all her vast contrivances of charm — her grand procession

of the seasons; her many musics of loud diapasons and low babblings and clear, sweet trills and bird notes; her seas and lands; her cloudy splendors; her glancing lights and shades and darkling closes; her cold and snowy exaltations, and the warm mother's breast she keeps for her tired children — Nature, and this green earth, will mock his famishing senses with invitations to a myriad feasts. To look upon his kind, absorbed in infinite activities of work and play, in loves and friendships, will be a still more exquisite torture. This man's pursuit of his desire is the fine, eager coursing of a greyhound; that other's is the lithe bound of a tiger on his prey. All ways he looks are shapes of power and energy addressed to hope. Men and women, in all their meetings and partings, with their sure tones, their lit looks of understanding, their trembling lips of tenderness, tantalize him with some secret, some trick of living, which he has not mastered. Tired mothers, bending to their constant household mercies, and the hands of little children — ever, with their tiny fingers and ringed, threadlike joints, life's tenderest appeal to a

man's fainting heart — these, most of all, will shame him with the sense that life, human life, escapes him. This is the pain of him who fails, and slinks, like a wounded beast, away from his fellows. It is in store for every man who will not compromise.

For no man, however hurt and shamed and beaten, however curst, will bear this agony of the vision and the sense of life if his spirit be not ruled by the foe of compromise. Escape is easy. He could learn "philosophy" if he would; and there are for all but a very, very few men opportunities of duty and sacrifice. Even Clough, who, perhaps, has already come into the reader's thought, — Clough, who by reason of his frank confession of his longing and weak tenderness for this earthly, human life has a fine distinction among those who have scorned most the insulting terms on which they are permitted to live, — even Clough had clearly seen, had justly weighed, not merely the reason and necessity, but also the moral commendations, of acquiescence and arrangement.

"We must, we must.
Howe'er we turn and pause and tremble,
Howe'er we shrink, deceive, dissemble, —
Whate'er our doubting, grief, disgust, —
The hand is on us, and we must.
We must, we must."

Yes, and there's duty in it, too: —

"Duty, that's to say, complying
With whate'er 's expected here."

And for what higher mandate does he disregard the iron law? With what finer voice does he confute the voice of a conscience instructed by all human experience? His argument is nothing but a "maybe": —

"If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars."

It is, in truth, from no self-deceit that natures such as Clough's revolt at common-sense and scorn all practical moralities. Sooner or later, the path which such men tread brings them to a point whence they can clearly see the goal of all their wandering. And it is no Dark Tower of mysterious compensations. It is, rather, the very Castle of Despair.

That way this hard path leads. The scorn of low contents, the putting by of the ease of oblivion, the resolute facing out of all the black

and slinking horrors of the night-time, — these wrestlings are but preliminary exercises to the true encounter. They are all, in the last analysis, mere subordinations of the lesser to the greater hope, the meaner to the nobler aspiration. But to put by all hope, all aspiration, all desire, to "reason with the worst that may befall," to consider simply and sincerely that a cold negative may be the right, true answer to the long, fond questioning of life, — even so far a man will come. What but a demon in his breast could bring him to that pass? What in any sense natural impulse or instinct could bring him to do this — this, which one man will do, in the dark night, starting and sweating with his fear, while another man, far more courageous, perhaps, in all ordinary ways, shakes off the hideous thought and wills himself to sleep!

But this experience is harder to convey than any other I have touched upon. All our conceptions of failure, of giving up, are in fact so softened with the idea of compensation, hope is a habit into which we so unconsciously fall from the mere fact of being alive, that there

is to most of us no vaguer word than despair. To realize it, a man must, I think, be brought somehow into the state in which beaten men sense the things they have desired. He must be as Lear was on the moor; as the blind Œdipus was when he took leave of his children; as Othello was, his power in Cyprus gone, the willow-song of his slain Desdemona in his ears; as Hamlet was when his lips, which trembled with tender love, were twisted with the maniac grin and the foul words that drove Ophelia from his side. But even then — even in such case as these were in — circumstance and fate are not enough to work despair. It is no mere response of reason to events. It is not an intellectual experience. It is, in the actual sense of it, a sort of turning of the parent soul upon its offspring; a strangling and a trampling down of all desires; the ghastly infanticide of a thousand hopes and longings.

For these will live, in spite of circumstance, if only they escape the Herod in a man's own breast. They will live on in the foulest dungeon; in the sordidest poverty; in the deepest shame. Though they be caverned from the

light of day, they will still live, and suck their sustenance from whatever noxious growths, whatever dark, forbidden roots of things, they find protruding from their cavern walls — roots, maybe, of the flowers and the great, green trees above. Circumstance alone will never make a tragedy. Catastrophe is tragical only when it strikes a Lear, an Œdipus. The true tragedy is in the men themselves, — in the stern thrusting off of mercy, and tearing loose the bandage, and turning of the face to the wall. It is that in them, not fate or circumstance, which awes us in the presence of these souls.

But it is not, I think, in the respect of a man's work, in his straining after life, or even in his fronting of despair, which are, nevertheless, unavoidable experiences if the foe of compromise dominates his nature, that its utmost power is exhibited. These are hard and cruel tyrannies, but the demon is more ruthless still. For compromise, though it be intrenched in a complete circle and circumvallation, and able to strike at will from without, and though it be enabled also, through countless disaffections of desire and reason, to intrigue within, will never

find its supreme opportunity until all desires shall be fused in overmastering passion, and all the myriad calls and challenges of life shall mingle in a single poignant and delirious appeal. The opportunity of compromise the besieger will be supreme only when, upon the ears that strain at the tumult and the silence, the mating note shall fall — when, before the eyes that weary with their long gaze into the mysteries, the woman's form shall pass. Strifes of the day and terrors of the night, — through these a man may go, and keep his faith in unfaith. For with these a man may fight; things or shadows, they are foes to fight with. But how shall a man fight with the woman? And never came a woman yet but as the emissary, the ardent or unwitting advocate, of compromise. Never but by compromise were two lives joined together, or a child born into the world. The same fell thing within a man which turns his bread into ashes, and makes his work and play like the gasping and the sinking knees of a nightmare dream, will likewise turn his love into a whipping with scorpions and a bath in fiery whirlwinds.

For the ideal, which was before of life, and of a right, full share in life, is now of a thing quite as clearly unattainable. It is the vision and the dream of sharing all life with another nature. The ideal is of sympathy: of the perfect knowledge and sure sentience of another human soul.

And now, no doubt, I come to that in a man's life which it is hardest to invade with reasonable prose speech. Here, that speech is most convincing which has the most of passion in it. Even that other agony of straining after the whole of life is oftenest set forth, and best set forth, with the suggestive imagery, the passionate music of verse. There is no prose Prometheus. But even in such of the poetry of protest as has an intellectual cast — in certain of the speeches of the heroes of great tragedies, in Omar, in Byron, in Clough — there is seldom to be found anything beyond a setting forth, an expression, of the tragical in life and in the human spirit. Moved with great pity and great horror, we are more likely merely to fall wondering and weeping than to reflect, with any coherency, concerning the

cause, or the true nature, of all that woe we read of. If we would bring ourselves to any clear-eyed comprehension of the utmost human wretchedness, if we would try to understand how supreme pain comes into the lives of men, our speech and our thought must be in prose. It comes, I believe, only when circumstance besets a nature dominated by this power which we may call, in a very real sense, unnatural, since it seems so flatly to contradict the natural order and break in upon the "harmony of the universe."

For if, to draw near the greater experience through the less, we speak first of friendship, it is not hard to see why the ideal of sympathy can never be realized. The impossibility does not lie essentially in that imperfection of our knowledge of other natures which comes of the imperfection of our means of communication. It is true, of course, that no human being ever had a perfect knowledge of another nature. Eye and ear and sense, however they have pierced and penetrated, have never once surmounted altogether the wall of flesh. But our separation one from another is not the main

fact. The main fact is our strangeness one to another — our real difference and unlikeness.

The impossibility of the ideal lies essentially in this: that no two natures can ever have the same vision or reflection and the same sense of life. Pass but an inch beyond courtesy and the conventions, and you encounter, in whatever human being you press into, a foreignness of impulse and of motive which reveals him little short of your antipodes. Life, which engulfs you both, is to him one element, to you another. Another sun, and other stars, are over him from his birth, and shed their strange rays on another world. Like they are, these worlds, and you can, with a certain comprehension, observe and study his. But you can never pass from yours to live in his, nor can he, crossing "the step or two of dubious twilight," ever once set foot on yours. It is not, therefore, the imperfection of speech and the false witness of conduct that set the bounds to friendship. Notwithstanding these, a merely intellectual companionship will sometimes come very near to completeness. On the contrary, it is often true, I think, that the more knowl-

edge a man gets of his friend through speech and conduct, the more clearly he perceives that they are irrevocably sundered. No doubt, if both are reconciled to compromise, they are in better case by reason of the better knowledge each has of the other's nature: a *modus vivendi* is easier to find and to observe. But the aspiration which we mean when we speak of an ideal of friendship has nothing to do with any makeshift *modus vivendi.* And by a *modus vivendi* I do not mean merely the sort of arrangement, of the nature of a commercial convention, which is frequently called friendship. Through that relation, though no tariff of thanks and apologies be kept up, nothing higher than a reciprocity of good offices will ever be attained. But even where a genuine affection exists, and begets faith, each nature, though the two be bound together by the noblest conceivable alliance, is still as a foreign kingdom to the other.

If, therefore, compromise be not accepted on both sides, friendships are bitter things; bitterest and cruelest when on one side there is the instinct and the leading of compromise,

and on the other side a blind loyalty to the ideal. For that same power which, if it be enthroned in any man, will play the Herod with his other longings, will likewise make a horrid murder of this strong and tender longing to be companioned. The proof of a rigid adherence to the ideal in friendship is not good-nature, forbearance, moderation. And yet, these are necessary; it is necessary to adhere to one's own orbit, never disarranging the solar system of society by a mad plunging through the estranging voids. But the man possessed of the demon will forever strive to get through the voids. In the actual experience, the space which divides him from the heart of his friend will seem no greater than that between the level of actual speech and conduct and the hidden level of motive and impulse which always underlies them. To reach that hidden source of speech and conduct, to know and share the true inner life behind the mask, below the deed, is the constant, tortured longing of an uncompromising friendship. But to the other sort of friendship such invasions will seem hostile; they will incur a forfeiture

of the alliance. When two human beings so address themselves to each other, the hurts they give and take are grievous; they could scarcely do each other worse hurts if they were mortal foes. Judged by all our reasonable standards of obligation, he of the ideal, he of the too great yearning for the heart of his friend, will be guilty of that friendship's death.

But there is a still more dreadful tyranny of the strange power inside of us. Not content with the murder of friendships, it will drive a man on to slay his love. There are men who will not, even for the highest prize of all, consent to compromise; who will not yield even to the most exquisite of all persuasions from self-torture to self-sacrifice — not even to that voice which is in truth the voice of every ardent and imperious desire, every longing, every hope and aspiration, in a man's own heart of heart. For it is all that, and more, in every man that is not either wholly intellectual and brutish. No tribe or people ever set up a Victory that did not wear a woman's shape. No man ever had an ideal of love that did not relate itself to everything in his whole vision of life, or ever drew near

to an adventure of it, through the profoundest of all human relations, without a truly awful sense of recognition, of the ending of a lifelong quest.

If we should try to see how this ideal grows in a man, as we have tried to do with the others, we should have to go back to the very beginnings of his sentience and intelligence. It is not surprising that many, striving to account for it, have been driven to the theory of an earlier existence and a transmigration of souls, so unearthly is the conviction of an earlier fore-knowledge and prescience which it brings. There was never a truer story of an ideal love than Mr. Kipling's "Brushwood Boy." No other experience, certainly, has so bewildering an effect of the realization of a dream as this has; and it is clear that the dream begins very near indeed to the hither bound of life. The need of sympathy, that is to say, the craving to share with some other human soul the vision and the sense of life, is in every one of us far older than the "natural" or the reasoned need of mates and helpmeets, and it long outlasts them. The crying out of a child in the dark is, no doubt, the beginning of the quest and wandering.

The natural need, the reasoned need, a man can satisfy, can satiate; for these, from their very nature, belong altogether to the realm of compromise. The laws we make for them, like those of our reasonable friendships, are of the nature of commercial regulations. The morality we invoke is the morality of exchange, of obligation, of compensation. The higher quest is hopeless. But to see how it is hopeless we must have a truer and more vivid conception of sympathy than that we ordinarily have when we use the word; for every instance, every experience we can call to mind, falls leagues short of any realization of perfect sympathy. We speak of perfect sympathy and perfect faith as though they could be felt and known together; but if sympathy were perfect there would be no place for faith. It is never perfect, because no two human beings ever have in themselves the same vision and reflection and the same sense of life. Even when, like the gentler flow of friendship, the master passion breaks upon the reefs of the dividing Darien, its great tides will indeed beset them with an onslaught far more power-

ful and thunderous, but not less vain. Never once will the two oceans mingle; never once will their estranged waters move with the same currents to and fro beneath the stars. Nor is it the intervening solid lands that make the true estrangement. The vexed Atlantic surface of one human soul could not, were there no continent between, obey with its undulations the mild, pale moon of the Pacific. No flame of passion ever fused, no sacrament ever truly joined together, no long wandering, hand in hand, through days and years, through joys and sorrows, ever cemented into a real union and oneness two differing natures. A man will as soon accomplish that other demoniac task of compassing and pervading the whole of life as this of breaking through the barriers of the flesh, and then, with one great roar and plunge or silent mingling of the waters, compassing and pervading the soul of the woman on his bosom.

And the demon, if he hold the man to this, the cruelest of all the tasks he sets him, will make of him a murderer once more. I say, of him: for convention, and the habit of con-

straint which comes of weakness, and the powerful and noble instinct of motherhood — itself the very mother of all sacrifice — these things mercifully forbid that the foe of compromise shall rule in women's natures. All their training is in arrangement and adjustment, and their strength is faith. They are turned back, by the universal conditions of their lives, from quests and questionings. We have, indeed, in the self-revelations of the unfortunate Marie Bashkirtseff and a few others, the proof that this usual and merciful atrophy of the tragical impulse has not always been accomplished. But with a few exceptions women are without it themselves, and when they find it in a man they can only fall to praying, with poor Ophelia, —

"O help him, you sweet heavens!"

Save that they conform to the artistic necessity of crises, the two plays, "Hamlet" and "Othello," illustrate as faithfully as any true experience could, and far more vividly, the devastation which uncompromising love may make. Ophelia crazed and Desdemona mur-

dered,— these hideous consequences are not the work of circumstance, of fate, alone, but equally of that which ruled alike in the breast of the Moor and of the Dane. For these two consummate women, these high-natured men, were surely dowered with all that ever yet has entered into human love to make it glorious. Beauty and faith and tenderness these women had to give; Hamlet, the refined, Othello, the elemental, were of a fineness and capacity to match such largess as life brought them. Both were by these voices called from dreary wanderings: one, from his soldier's hard and ill-paid service; the other, from his worse combats with the powers within — from that straining at life and fronting of despair which even Shakespere, speaking with his voice, could only vaguely shadow forth in words. What, indeed, could be more contrary to all nature and all reason and all right than that such men as these were, served as they were served, so drawn, so impelled, should bend so readily to doubt and question? Sacrifice, rather than desire, was no doubt, in the last analysis, the true deterrent motive with them both; for

both were noble. But a too close analysis would lose for us the whole and simple horror of their deeds. The main thing is, that we ourselves cannot look upon the havoc which they made of love, of their own lives, of the lives of these helpless, trustful women, without a strange response, somewhere in our own deeps, to that which speaks in the bloody passion of Othello, in the coarse gibes of the sensitive Hamlet. If we seek out the kinship between them, the kinship among all tragical natures, we find it, I think, in this: that at every turn, at every fork, they take, and must take, whatever course is least like acquiescence in whatever incompleteness. They cannot learn the trick which through the constant repetition is become the habit of our lives — the trick which overthrows and puts to sleep the demon of remorseless search and question.

But few indeed, even of the ill-starred brotherhood of them that cannot acquiesce, will ever run in this superb and awful way upon the sudden, sharp point of disaster. Crises are no more characteristic of this than of any other actual experience. Where love

has once sprung to life in a day, it has a thousand times grown with a slow palpitation to its full, regal power. Where it has once met with quick catastrophe, it has a thousand times lived on through long years of an unspeakable pain. This, of course, I mean only of the higher sort of love; for that, if it ever truly live at all, will long outlive the fury of our youth. It is, indeed, the thing by which men live themselves, if life be not the aridest of promenades; the one true glory and radiance to be found on this earth; the thing which is clearly the most unearthly of all — save, perchance, this other monstrous thing I write of; the thing of which one sometimes catches a shining trace, like the trace of stars, in the swift meeting of the eyes of such as through the years and the sorrows have walked together, side by side, when some old memory stirs. That, I think, all but the lowest men will say, is the best of this earthly life. And all experience teaches that it can never be won but by infinite persistence in acceptance and in faith. Yet there are real men, and men, too, of natures as sensitive as the unreal

Hamlet's, as noble as Othello's, who will put aside even that cup from their lips, and say to fate, to circumstance: "Look you, I know this vintage, and my soul's athirst. For I have wandered to and fro through all this human life — through work, through play; tasted its pleasures; borne its bitter sorrows. I am a man, with all desires, all longings, of mankind; and this, I know, is best. But I will not buy, with a lying and hypocrisy, a venal faith, even this. No, not even for this will I sell my own soul, though I sell it into bliss."

And yet, —

> "'Tis common-sense, and human wit
> Can find no better name for it.
> Submit, submit."

There needs but a shutting of the eyes to somewhat, an opening of the eyes to somewhat else; but a trick of the will, and it is regnant; a turn of the wrist, a twist of the knee, and the wrestle with the demon is won. The next fall will be easier, and the next. At last, he sleeps; and life is ours once more to fight for, to enjoy. Bread is sweet upon the tongue,

work is a noble warfare, and the charmed cup of love and sacrifice will never once run dry.

And is there, then, no word to say of any compensation for the havoc which the demon makes? It would, I fear, be wrong, unwise, even to hint at any good the foe of compromise brings to our humanity which it so cruelly outrages. Certainly, there is little we can note of its victims, of such as we perceive to be subject to its power, — little, indeed, in them or in their lives, — that moves us to condone its rule. We do, as I have said, pay to such men a deep, involuntary homage of wonder and of awe when they come before us in the crises of great tragedies and whenever they appear in history. But there is an artistic necessity, like the other necessity of crises, to endow the heroes of tragedy with a natural, simple course which makes them heroes, besides the extraordinary and unnatural heroism — if heroism be a right word for it — which makes them also tragical. In history, likewise, it is only by reason of exceptional endowment, or by the accident of birth, that such men ever mount high enough,

whether it be on thrones or funeral pyres, to draw our gaze across the centuries. It is not reason, but a prompting of that very hidden thing itself, which at this instant would turn our minds upon some thought of the superb, vaguely triumphant leading of forlorn hopes and dying in last ditches. Turn, rather, from the Savonarolas and the Hamlets to the pinched faces, the bowed forms, the stumbling gait, of such as you yourself will know to be of that strange band; and though there be indeed some little stirring in you of the awe of tragedy, you will shrink back from their companionship. Strong men, bearing visible burdens of duty and of help, scorn them for dastards and for shirks. Women, though they begin with them in pity, end in despair, or in contempt and weariness. Children do not come about their knees. There is no test or standard of excellence known to our ordinary thought by which they are approved; for out of their desolation no light or cheer comes into other lives.

If there is indeed any compensation, it must lie in this: that these ghastly lives, spent in

the disregard of all that the long experience of mankind can teach concerning the way to live best in this world, in seeking peace through warfare, and truth through denial, and faith through unfaith, and love in the scorn of all our fond, weak practices of loving, — that these lives must proceed out of something in us which did not come into us out of any former lives on this earth, or out of this earthly order which we live in now. If, after the fashion of compromise, we would make the best of that in us which wars with it, we might lay hold, for our own midnight hours of wrestling, of a certain vague renewal of hope and faith which sometimes, with an irresistible resurrection, swells in these tortured breasts: a hope, a faith, that we are also parts of another order — unseen, vast, and free; that we are meant to break through barriers, meant to eat of the right heavenly manna, and to work with sure hands, and to see with an unclouded vision, and to love with a fearless love; that there is indeed some other peace than the peace of compromise, the peace of acquiescence.

But to no such word of compensation will they hearken who are set upon this stony way. Tired, aimless wanderers through whatever wastes, lank, pale anchorites of whatever desert caves, torn combatants in whatever battlings of the spirit, wailing pursuers of whatever other human souls, they welcome no comfort, seek no heartening. Save to some other of their own brotherhood, their speech is scarce intelligible. Accost, with any pitying remonstrance, a member of this band, and he will answer back, with wavering and uncertain voice, with eyes astrain: "This way I live; I can no other. This way I face this life I did not seek, this mystery I cannot solve, these shadowy forms of things I cannot grasp. This way I work. This way I love. This way I fight for peace. This way I grope for God."

A DEFENCE OF AMERICAN PARTIES

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In every national election the American voter has three things to consider. He must take into account men, policies, and historical organizations. He must make his choice among rival candidates, among contrary programmes, among embattled parties. In most cases, his choice will be determined by the third consideration. It is a liberal estimate to say that one American in ten votes for a person, and that one in twenty votes for a platform. The great mass of Americans vote for parties.

It is unnecessary to prove the fact, for no one denies it. Only professional agitators and implacable reformers ever disregard it. To the foreigner it is puzzling; to the independent it is baffling and perplexing; to the men who make their living by politics it is entirely satisfactory. And yet, undeniable and important

as the fact is, one seldom hears a serious attempt to explain it. On the contrary, one can scarcely turn to a single recent criticism of our party system without finding some expression to the effect that our party divisions are meaningless. We are told that neither of our great parties stands for any principle whatever. If we seek a definition of the terms "Democrat" and "Republican," we learn little more than that one is a member of the party founded by Jefferson and which once stood for States' Rights, and the other of the party that saved the Union and freed the slaves.

It is noteworthy that neither De Tocqueville nor Mr. Bryce, though there were fifty years between the dates of their books, could find in America any proper party divisions. "America," said De Tocqueville, who was here in 1831–1832, "has already lost the great parties which once divided the nation; and if her happiness is considerably increased, her morality has suffered by the extinction. . . . In the absence of great parties, the United States abound with lesser controversies; and public opinion is divided

into a thousand minute shades of difference upon questions of very little moment." Mr. Bryce, writing in the eighties, makes his denial of the existence of party principles almost as elaborate as his analysis of party machinery. "Neither party," he declares, "has any principles, any tenets. Both have traditions. Both claim to have tendencies. Both have certainly war-cries, organizations, interests enlisted in their support. But those interests are in the main the interests of getting or keeping the patronage or the government. Tenets and policies, points of political doctrine and points of political practice, have all but vanished." He, too, believes that there was a time when the organizations were animated by principles; but now, he avers, "they continue to exist, because they have existed. The mill has been constructed, and its machinery goes on turning, even when there is no grist to grind." The only difference he finds "perceptible even by a stranger" is "a difference of spirit or sentiment," which is, however, less marked than the corresponding difference between English Liberals and Conservatives.

Was the observant and fair-minded Englishman of the eighties, was the profoundly discerning Frenchman of the thirties, right in this severe arraignment of American parties? Certainly they are not without ample corroboration in the speeches and writings of American independents. Mr. John Jay Chapman, for example, whose essays had for a time much acceptance as independent utterances, finds that commercialism, pure and simple, has dominated both parties, and in fact the whole political life of the Republic, ever since the Civil War. Mr. Schurz, who has had far more experience in public life, and whose admirable studies of Clay and Lincoln would seem to indicate that he is not without historical perspective, has in recent years been almost constantly occupied in denouncing the leading policy, first of one party, and then of another, as the most heretical and dangerous yet proposed. Nevertheless, both parties persist in speaking of their "principles"; and these they do not merely promulgate, but "reaffirm."

What is the truth of the matter? Have we in fact, no proper and intelligible party

system? Is there no real and permanent difference between Democrats and Republicans? If such is the case, then why have the organizations survived, and why have they gone on elaborating their machinery to a perfection never attained elsewhere? Are our parties to be classed with the circus factions of Byzantium, or have they any claim to be compared with the Liberals and Conservatives of Great Britain and with the "Right" and "Left" of Continental politics. If there is an intelligible difference, then is it an affair of principles, of interests, or of sentiment? Is it based on class divisions, or on contrary theories of government, or on original sin? To attempt an answer that shall be other than merely negative is hazardous, no doubt, but to one who goes about it seriously and candidly much should be forgiven; for the inquiry goes to the very root of one's faith in the Republic.

Such an attempt would best begin by admitting that a foreigner, familiar with the political systems of compact and homogeneous communities, where most of the questions that are debated in the legislature or submitted to the

voters affect the whole mass of the people alike, where tradition and usage are stronger political forces than in America, and where classes are more clearly defined, may quite naturally look to find in American parties a stability of character and a fixedness of purpose which our federal plan, our mixed and unclassified population, and our diversity of material environment, conspire to prevent. Even in De Tocqueville's day, the United States were to such a country as France almost as the Roman Empire was to the Athens of a former age. France was the most homogeneous and centralized great power of Europe, while in America the remoteness in space and in character of the Southwestern pioneers from the New Englanders was scarcely less notable than the remoteness of the Briton and the Gaul from the impassive Roman. The triumphal entry into Washington of the Tennesseeans and western Pennsylvanians, shouting for Jackson, and the discomfiture of Adams's sedate supporters, may very well have suggested to De Tocqueville one of the acutest of his distinctions — the

distinction, namely, between parties which stand merely for contrary views and policies and parties which, like separate nations, are in perpetual antagonism over conflicting interests. The justice of the comparison was proved when the Southern Rights Associations stiffened into the military array of the Southern Confederacy. It is true that by becoming sectional American parties have sometimes lost their proper character, and taken on the character of hostile communities. That was the true character of the New England Federalists during the War of 1812, of the Nullifiers in 1833, and of both the Abolitionists and the Southern Rights men in the fifties. Even the Republican party, in its beginnings, had somewhat of that aspect. The Whigs and Tories of Revolutionary times, though their division was not sectional, were "rival peoples," to use De Tocqueville's phrase, and their peculiarly virulent methods have reappeared in organizations not in any sense their successors.

In more recent times, while sectional interests have seldom given rise to new parties, they

have often subverted to their uses the machinery of the old. Alexander Johnston has pointed out that when the Southerners persuaded the Democratic National Convention of 1868 to declare against the enfranchisement of freedmen they put the party on record against its cardinal tenet of manhood suffrage. For many years, and in fact to this day, the dominant party in the South has been the white man's party, and the other the black man's party. The two organizations have stood in that quarter for an opposition of races far more clearly than for any division of opinion on national questions. In other corners of the Union, and even in particular states, entirely local movements have often controlled conventions, nominated candidates, and written platforms. Certainly a great number, perhaps a majority, of the state and municipal contests waged by Democrats against Republicans are fought out on issues not at all related to those debated in national campaigns, though of course success or failure in local elections is often of vital importance to the national organizations. In general, the vastness of the country and the

multiplicity of state and county and city and town governments operate continually to distract both the great parties from their larger purposes, to weaken the control of broad principles, to subordinate ends to means.

And these things have their effect not only directly, but also indirectly, through their effect on the personnel of the governing groups within the parties. Power gained in the politics of a state or a city, in which national questions have logically no part to play, is exercised in the politics of the nation. National conventions are largely composed of men whose views are bounded by narrow horizons, whose very names are synonymous with faction. The prominence of such men in the newspapers is probably one of the circumstances which lead to the widespread belief that neither party is controlled by any general views of government or by any steady purposes. What reason is there, one naturally inquires, to expect that such men will entertain one theory rather than another of the nature and scope of government? How should prominence in the Chicago board of aldermen fit a man for determining the true Democratic view

of the authority of Congress over territory acquired by treaty? What is the connection between the scheme of municipal potato patches and any particular theory of constitutional limitations? Why should the leader of Tammany Hall, rather than the leader of a German orchestra, sit in consultation over a difficult question in public finance?

The rise of the professional politicians has affected our parties in much the same way. Foreign and independent critics probably exaggerate the number and the power of the class, but that there is such a class, and that it is distressingly large and dangerously powerful, can scarcely be denied. It is quite probable, too, that it is relatively larger in America than in other countries, because there are more politics in America than elsewhere. To be a professional politician — that is to say, to adopt politics as a bread-winning occupation — is of course to renounce the guidance of theories and principles. The professional may have opinions of his own concerning public questions; but his real concern is to ascertain the opinions and desires of other men and manipu-

late them to his profit, not to advance his own. He favors the platform that will attract votes, the candidate whose success will enable him to dictate appointments and distribute contracts. He need not be in any positive sense a bad man or a bad citizen. It is merely that what in other men is patriotism or ambition or fanaticism is to him business. He may conform in all he does to the ordinary business standards of morality. His prominence in the party councils is not necessarily unfavorable to any particular principle; on the contrary, his skill in campaign work may be of great value whenever his party happens to be making a campaign of principle. Nevertheless, his presence is a sort of protest against principles in general, and if he and his fellows had absolute control, the party would cease to have any principles whatever. It is, however, worth while to remember that no hard and fast line can be drawn between the professionals and those whom, for want of a better word, we may call the amateurs in politics. Foreigners like Mr. Bryce speak as if the classes were quite separate, but as a matter of fact few professionals

live up to the professional standard of indifference to principle, any more than the ordinary amateur lives up to his standard of indifference to profit. So far, however, as professionalism prevails in either party, it tends to make of that party a business enterprise rather than the organized expression of a political faith.

It is also true that the composition of the two parties is appreciably affected by many other circumstances that may best be set down as accidental. Men are brought together in the same party by causes that have nothing to do with their political opinions. A capitalist, having large vested interests in a particular state, finds it advisable to connect himself with the party which rules it. A Catholic Irishman is pretty sure to be a Democrat. A German or a Swede, living in contact with Irish Democrats, is likely to be a Republican. In the South, the poor whites of the mountain regions have usually been hostile to the party dominant among the richer planters of the neighboring lowlands, whether it has chanced to be the Democratic or the Whig.

There is yet another characteristic of Ameri-

can politics which goes to sustain the criticisms of our party system. The rapidity of our growth, the steady development and frequent expansions of the country, the shifting of population, the new material problems that keep arising, — in a word, the changefulness of American life, — could not fail to have a marked effect on politics. Nowhere do issues appear and disappear so swiftly. The "paramount issue" of one decade is remotely historical in the next. When the polls close on one election, no man can predict what men or questions will be uppermost in the public mind when they are opened again. After the second election of President Cleveland, chiefly on the issue of tariff reform, who could foresee that four years later many of the forces that bore him into power would be arrayed behind the extremest advocate of high protective tariffs on the issue of gold and silver? Who, after that exciting campaign of 1896, dreamed that two years later we should be debating the best way to deal with two dependent islands in the Atlantic and a thousand in the Pacific? Even the most steadfast adherent of a general principle

cannot apply it with infallible accuracy to new conditions so swiftly brought about, to new questions so suddenly thrust before the public. Inevitably, from the limitations of human intelligence and the inextricable tangle of human motives, parties will hesitate, divide, advance too rapidly, halt, march backwards. The consistency possible to the exceptional few who always reason calmly and forecast shrewdly is beyond the great majority of men; and in American parties, whatever may be true of the distribution of nominations and offices and the management of campaigns, it is the majority that in the long run determines the main lines of the programme. The majority must frequently decide in haste, without any adequate comprehension of new conditions or any careful study of the bearing which old principles may have upon them, and superficial reasoning, no less than passion and impulse, leads it astray from the path of its political faith. Theories and principles are neglected for the practical requirements of an emergency. No party that ever existed in any country has been so exceptional in its composition or so inspired in its

leadership as to apply its professed principles with perfect logic to every question it had to meet and every task it had to discharge. The test of consistency is in America an exceptionally hard one, and here, as elsewhere, the human nature of parties has often been unequal to it.

Let us also admit, in order that we may, so far as possible, account for the attitude of the critics, that many of the questions with which our parties attempt to deal, even when they are not local or sectional questions, do not clearly involve the principles which either was formed to maintain. They are questions of expediency alone, and sometimes of a merely temporary expediency — of the best means to attain an end whose desirability is not questioned at all. There have been whole periods, in fact, during which the prevalence of such issues has thrown the permanent divisions of opinion into the background, — periods which Mr. Bryce characterizes as times of pause and quiescence, but which in fact have been times of great business activity and material progress. Intense political excitement, the imminence or crisis of constitutional change, revolutions, wars, —

these are interruptions of a people's ordinary activities, though they bring new parties to life and transform or destroy the old. Peace, prosperity, contentment, a smooth working of the government, — these things make citizens neglectful of their differences, and may even mislead an observer into the notion that none exist. The circumstance that both Bryce and De Tocqueville happened to view American society during just such periods of industrial activity and comparative political quiescence should be taken into account. It is hardly probable that either of those trained observers would have reached, say in 1860 or in 1896, the conclusion which one reached at the end of the Era of Good Feeling and the other on the eve of those developments which led up to the extraordinary campaign of 1896. Of all the foreigners who visited America before 1860, only one, Sir Charles Lyell, seems to have foreseen the specific process by which slavery was finally rooted out. After the compromise of 1850, nine Americans out of ten probably believed that Clay had really averted forever the danger which ten years later made

the same men despair of the Union. It is not unreasonable to suppose that even the two most perspicacious foreign students of American institutions were misled by temporary aspects of affairs.

Bearing in mind, then, these characteristics of American politics which militate against party consistency, which tend to weaken the hold of permanent principles on party machinery and to lessen their ascendency over party spirit, does a reasonable and broad view of our political history sustain the main criticism of our parties? On the contrary, I believe it will concede to them as good a character for adherence to their several theories of government as can be claimed, let us say, for the two historical English parties. Farther: I maintain that a fair-minded examination of the entire aspect of our two great parties in recent years, and even at the present time, leads to the conclusion that they still represent, with reasonable consistency, the two great ideals of government, the two great sets of interests, and the two great types of character, which in modern self-governing communities have usually lain at the

base of party systems. One, I believe, has stood and still stands mainly for an effective government, the other for a free government. One seeks an equalization of welfare and opportunity, the other bulwarks the historical rights of property. One is responsive to the changeful voice of the popular will, the other follows the intelligent guidance of successful men of affairs. One is the party of ideas and ideals, the party of liberty, the other is the party of practical achievement, the party of authority and order. Aspiration and Utopianism against purpose and opportunism, genius and eccentricity against common sense and self-interest, the universal and the visionary against the specific and the practical, the kingdom of the air against the kingdom of the earth, — such I conceive to be the perpetual antagonism of parties; and the great lines of battle, now straight and clear, now twisted by lesser conflicts or obscured by temporary distortions of the surface of society, do yet run unceasing, if not unbroken, through the whole course of our history.

If we limit our view to the period covered by

the life of the Republican party, it will be less conclusive than it would be if we should go back to the beginning, but it will exhibit with sufficient clearness those permanent and essential characteristics of both the great parties which a single brief period might not reveal. The most misleading period of all is perhaps the period covered by the birth and the quickly won ascendency of the younger organization. The Democratic party had already vanquished two successive rivals, and, as usually happens in the case of a party left without an equal antagonist, it was torn asunder by the sectional interests which sought to use its power for special ends. The question had arisen, which faction had the better right to the machinery and the name. When, however, the Southern Confederacy was formed, the Southern wing ceased to be in any proper sense a party under the Constitution, and the Douglas Democrats of the North were left in undisputed possession of the old organization. We may, therefore, with little fear of controversy, treat them as the true Democratic party throughout the period of secession and civil war.

But what better instance, the critics may cry out, could anywhere be found of apostasy to principle than the platforms and the attitude of the Northern Democrats in those years? Was not liberty the very pole star of Jefferson's statesmanship, the sum and total of his political philosophy? And did not the Douglas men go for acquiescence in the Dred Scott decision, for that makeshift theory of "squatter sovereignty" which threw the territories open to slavery? Did they not to all intents and purposes stand for slavery itself? And the party which you now characterize as the party of authority and order — did it not owe its very existence to the instinct of liberty? Was it not built up to make war on slavery?

Such is indeed the common view, and certainly, in that crisis, the party of Jefferson would seem to have abandoned one of its fundamental principles to its youthful rival. I conceive, however, that on the question then dividing the Democracy and the country it was necessary to choose between the two conceptions of freedom which together made up the Jeffersonian idea of liberty. Those were, the

freedom of individuals and the freedom of communities; the right of men to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," and the right of communities to self-government. In that inscription which Jefferson himself wrote for his tomb at Monticello, and which no doubt sets forth his own deliberate estimate of his life-work, he mentions but one of his deeds — the founding of the University of Virginia — and but two of his writings — the Declaration of Independence and the Virginia Statute of Religious Liberty. One of these famous documents applied the doctrine of liberty more especially to a community; the other applied it to individuals. In all his teaching, and throughout the history of the party he founded, these two conceptions of liberty are clearly set forth. The party of manhood suffrage was the same party which asserted the right of the several states to control their own suffrage laws. The party which rebelled against the alien and sedition laws made no protest when Georgia maintained against John Marshall that she had a right to treat the Cherokees as she chose. In 1860, when nobody but the more extreme Abolition-

ists talked of interfering with slavery in the Southern states, when the main question was of the power and duty of Congress in reference to slavery in the territories, one set of that party's precedents and traditions pointed clearly to the "squatter sovereignty" contention that the matter should be left to the territories themselves, while the other set favored, but far less clearly, the contention of the free-soilers. The former was certainly the strict construction view of the matter, it was certainly maintaining the party's ancient attitude toward the federal government, while the inconsistency involved in its attitude toward slavery was chargeable to the whole country, and not to one party alone. It was an inconsistency embedded in the fundamental law of the Republic.

On the other hand, only a superficial view can fail to discern in the course of the Republicans the programme of a true strong government party; of a party bent on using for a perfectly specific purpose all the powers with which, by the most liberal construction of the Constitution, the national government could be endowed. Hamilton himself never brushed

aside the sticklings of his associates more impatiently than the early Republicans brushed aside the misgivings of the old-school public men who could not see how the great Northern majority was going to have its way in the territories. The desire of the Northern majority was to exclude slavery from the territories altogether, and that had been its desire for many years. The peculiarity about the new party was not that it represented the common Northern feeling about the matter, but that it went to work in a practical way to do what the old parties had not dared to undertake.

When the issue shifted from the territories to secession, and Buchanan the unready made way for Lincoln and Seward, its essential unlikeness to the Democratic party appeared more plainly. "No state," said Buchanan, "has a right to secede from the Union;" but he could find in the Constitution no warrant for coercing a state back into the Union, and he declared that the enforcement of the laws by the Executive had been rendered impracticable in South Carolina. The emergency, and the leadership of a man who, like Washington himself, was

greater than any party, did indeed give the Republicans a position somewhat like that of the early Federalists, so that they could for a time speak of themselves with some reason as the defenders of the government, and not merely the advocates of one theory of its nature. Nevertheless, their course was quite in keeping with that view of the government which their predecessors, the Federalists and Whigs, had taken. They gave little time to academic discussions, and never did formulate their theory as the secessionists and the Northern Democrats formulated theirs. On the contrary, they set to work organizing regiments and building battleships. In order that the Constitution might be obeyed to the letter, the Northern Democrats let the Union be endangered. In order that the Union might be saved, the Republican leaders did not hesitate, if occasion arose, to violate the Constitution. The immense service which they were thus enabled to render should not blind us to the fact that even Lincoln's inspired opportunism *was* opportunism, and nothing else. It is plain that the overthrow of slavery, as it actually

came about, was to his mind justified by the main end he was seeking, namely, the preservation of the Union, and not itself the end, however ardently he desired it. The theorists in the Republican ranks, the Abolitionists and the extremists in general, never did commit the party to their crusade against slavery. From first to last, during the war period, the sane, conservative, practical men of the North had the upper hand, and they felt their way, step by step, as has always been the wont of successful English and American leaders, through war and emancipation, to the rescue of the Union. They gave their party the character which it still retains, and which repels from it the fanatic and the enthusiast, and attracts to it the successful man of affairs. They made it, above all things, businesslike. The slavery controversy and the war, important as they were, appear now, nevertheless, as an episode in our history, and when the Republican party turned from them to questions of a more abiding sort, it had already arrayed behind it the wealth and the business interests which in America correspond to the class interests and vested rights on which the

conservative parties of Europe have always relied. It was already the strong government party in respect of the interests it represented no less than in respect of its policies and its unformulated principles.

The Reconstruction question, while it still forced the Democrats to choose whether they would go for the freedom of individuals or the right of communities to manage their own affairs, did yet throw into a clearer light the antagonism of interests and motives which makes two parties necessary. In that period, Thaddeus Stevens was the leader of the Republicans in Congress, and an expression of his concerning the status of the Southern states after the war, probably the most perplexing question in the interpretation of the Constitution that our public men have ever had to consider, should be set beside Buchanan's utterance concerning their status after secession. The Southern states, said Stevens in effect, are out of the Union for all the purposes for which it is necessary to consider them out of the Union. Such an emergence from the chaos of theory was not only characteristic of Republi-

can leadership; it was a true statement of the Republican standard of values. It was the effective party's contempt for theory when theory might stand in the way of results. In the discussion of the theory of reconstruction, Stevens and his associates had certainly no advantage over the opposition. Reverdy Johnson and Bayard were at home on that ground, and could answer effectively every attempt to justify the reconstruction scheme from the Constitution. It so happened, moreover, that reconstruction, unlike the war, was an enterprise that demanded for success fidelity to the great principles of our government and of all free government, and particularly to that principle of local self-government for which the Democrats had so long neglected its twin principle of individualism. The principle was disregarded this time, not in dealing with an emergency, but in a wrestle with conditions that have persisted, in an experiment of governmental machinery that was meant to be permanent. The party of the main chance went wrong from its too practical impulse, just as, a few years before, the party of general

principles had entangled itself to the point of absolute helplessness in the meshes of its theory.

No doubt, we must concede to the critics that there was here more than a conflict of views and of general interests. The Republicans were not bent solely on solidifying the Union and securing the great results of the war. They also meant to make sure of negro votes, to replace those they were already losing from a reaction in the North. To that sort of expediency — to party expediency — the Democrats also were quite sufficiently alive. But for the vision, since realized, of a solidly Democratic South, they might have hesitated longer before deciding which aspect of human liberty they loved the more devotedly. In the main, however, the history of reconstruction is a good instance of the inadequacy of opportunism to the highest sort of governmental work.

The period following reconstruction cannot be designated with the name of any one question or of any one event. It was characterized by a gradual subsidence of sectionalism, though many questions raised by the war and reconstruction were still debated. The issues which

soon came to the top, however, were more like those to which the country turned after the second war with Great Britain. They were mainly due to the enlarged life of the Republic, to the immense increase in the business activities of the people, and to the changed and changing methods of industry. They were questions not clearly contemplated by the founders either of the government or of the parties; but the division of the two parties on them came about quite naturally, and in accordance with the character of each. The Republican party accepted the new developments with less question, adapted its programmes to them, and commended itself to successful men of business as by far the more effective instrument for getting what they wanted from the government. The war tariff, an emergency measure, was gradually shaped into an elaborate protective system. Encouragement and help were freely given to the Union Pacific Railroad and other enterprises which the tariff did not aid. Declaring that, as a result of its patriotic work, the United States were now a nation, and not a league, the dominant party acted on the theory, which in the

last of the legal tender decisions was formulated by the Supreme Court, that nationality meant the right of the general government to do whatever a nation ordinarily finds it necessary and proper to do. Boasting itself the party of achievement, of prosperity, of national success and well-being, it kept the control of affairs until the failure and undoing of Reconstruction gave the Democrats the votes of the Southern states, and in the North the reaction against sectionalism was followed by a reaction against centralism. Then the opposition, purified by long adversity, and at last intelligently led, came forward as the party of protest against sectionalism, centralism, and paternalism. It had also more than the advantage which an opposition ordinarily derives from instances of corruption in high places. Tilden in 1876 owed his great popular majorities chiefly to the feeling in the North that the Southerners had been too harshly treated. Cleveland in 1884 was elected chiefly as a protest against the undue influence of business interests at Washington, particularly as it was exhibited in tariff legislation and in the public record of his opponent.

The Democratic party was once more advocating both as its cardinal tenets, and for some years it continued to advocate them in such conservative ways that it acquired a character of respectability and moderation not always associated with the championship of liberty. Toward the end of the period it drew largely from an intelligent class of citizens whose political activity has been notable for a sincere but timid independence. Such was the state of parties when two swift changes of issues apparently revolutionized our whole political system.

First came an exceptionally violent outbreak of discontent, distinctly agrarian, with recent industrial and financial tendencies; then the Spanish War and the self-revelation of America as a world power. The first swept over the Democratic party like the Jacksonian wave of an earlier period, and made it more like the "Left" of Continental politics than any American party had ever been before. The second added the semblance of militarism and imperialism to those other isms — centralism and paternalism — which were already firmly established in the domestic policy of the Republican

party. Nevertheless, these changes have not deprived either party of its essential characteristics. Each still maintains its historical attitude toward the government, each still represents the same set of interests, and each in its composition still exhibits the same type of citizenship, as before the changes came.

The *tertium quid*, the entirely human element in the characters of the two parties, is the most permanent, the least changeful, of all. It was this, no doubt, which Mr. Bryce had in mind when he spoke of "a difference of spirit or sentiment perceptible even by a stranger." To an American it is palpable: but when it comes to defining it, the American is hardly in better case than the stranger. The art of the novelist, the dramatist, the student of human nature, is here more needful than the intellectual equipment of the political scientist. When all is said that can be said of principles and interests, there is still a connotation of the terms "Democrat" and "Republican" which baffles the lexicographer. Matthew Arnold succeeds in giving his reader a fairly clear notion of what he means by the great style in poetry without defining it, and perhaps

it may be possible to get into words, though not into any formal definition, what we mean by the two party names applied to individuals.

The Republican party, in its composition quite as clearly as in its policies, is the true successor of the Federalist and Whig parties. It bears to-day the stamp of Hamilton's purpose, of Marshall's constructive bent, of Clay's fertility in makeshifts, even more legibly than of Lincoln's profound insight into the popular mind or of Stevens's Cromwellian thoroughness. The reason is, that the men who followed Hamilton and Clay, and who listened most readily to Marshall's teaching, would to-day be in its ranks. However justly the West may claim its birthplace, its spiritual descent is from that New England party which saw with disgust the French ideas at work in the first Democratic clubs, and held a treaty of commerce with England preferable to any amount of brotherhood with the French revolutionists. The Northeast was the fountain head of its inspiration, though what is called the Old Northwest has long been more prolific of leaders and of specific policies. Of the two

historical types of American character, the New England Puritan and the Virginian, the former is by far the more prevalent among its members. The salient marks of that type are intelligence and thrift.

In America, intelligence and thrift mean success and wealth even more surely than elsewhere; but it should also be said that wealth in America does not imply in its possessor the same qualities and the same attitude toward society which it does in older countries. It does not imply a stolid and phlegmatic conservatism. Stolidity is here far commoner among people of moderate means and frugal lives. Most wealthy men on this side the water have made their own fortunes, or at least are so close to the beginnings of their families' importance that they are still without any great family pride, without traditional rules of conduct and traditional views of public questions. Wealthy Americans are likely to be very practical and very alert persons. They look straight at actual conditions, at the immediate future. They are alive to fresh opportunities. The party which draws its leadership largely from our aristocracy of

wealth can command far more executive ability, far more skill in business, far more knowledge of affairs, than its rival. For all practical enterprises of government, it has more than its share of that sort of ability which conquered this material continent.

No wonder, therefore, that it always goes before the people with a list of its practical achievements. Its orderly conventions are not unlike meetings of stockholders; its committees are like boards of directors. Here, one might say at almost any Republican gathering in the North, are American energy, American shrewdness, American business instinct, concerned with political work. These men will go at the matter directly, they will harmonize or compromise their differing purposes, they will waste no time with meaningless oratory, they will certainly get something done. Then each of them will go about his business. Such, for example, is the impression an observer would have got at the National Convention at Philadelphia in 1900.

At Kansas City in the following July, at Chicago four years earlier, one would have seen a different sort of Americans going at

their work in a different way. Here, one might have said, is the American idea still militant, the American character not yet smoothed out of its angularity by contact with the larger world. Here is no business association, but a debating society, and none of the most orderly at that. What was energy yonder is enthusiasm here; what was there compromise and agreement is here compromise and disagreement, or a pitched battle for supremacy. Here is less work and more oratory, less forethought of to-morrow and more questioning of the coming age, less correctness and more childlike honesty of purpose, less intelligence and more hospitality to great ideas. This is the political aspect, not of America the materially successful, but of America still revolutionary, still trying out the world's ideals.

With such phrases a stranger might roughly characterize almost any Democratic gathering in the North, except in certain cities where professional politicians do most of the party work; and the characterization would have been scarcely less true of Andrew Jackson's followers, or even of Jefferson's. The men who at the

beginning of the century distrusted the elder Adams would in Jackson's time have distrusted the younger, and the men who believed Jackson's charges against the National Bank would in 1896 have cried out against Wall Street and the "square mile" in London. Or, to consider the Democratic character in a more positive aspect, the men who, in the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798, set forth their demand for the right of free speech and their sense of brotherhood with the alien driven to our shores, would have helped in 1824 to overthrow King Caucus, to take away from the office-holders at Washington their privilege of naming candidates and making platforms, and to set up the American nominating convention instead. To-day, the same men would look favorably on the plan of choosing Senators by popular vote, and in 1896 they might even have joined in the attempt to reconstruct the financial system of the world in accordance with the popular conception of money.

The dominant impulse of such Americans in their relations with government is the spirit, not merely of liberty, but of liberty and equality.

"Give every man a chance" is the way they phrase their conception of that justice which is the health of the state. In Jefferson's time, the chance they fought for was a chance to vote and hold office whether they owned property or not. In Jackson's time, it was a chance to take the initiative by naming candidates and making platforms — privileges until then reserved to a few trained men at Washington. Under Mr. Bryan's leadership, it seemed to mean not merely more political power, but better industrial opportunities and a larger share of the fruits of prosperity.

To distrust all power that is in any wise hidden, to seek to put one's hands on the secret springs of the great machine, to set public opinion above the wisdom of the experienced and the skill of the expert, to project the common man into government, and thus make it altogether human — this is the instinct and passion of American Democracy; and this is the force that has played upon our institutions and constitutions from the beginning, after the intermittent and wavelike fashion of all forces that proceed from the depths of the human nature

of the multitude. It sent Jefferson, most inspired of political philosophers, least effective of public officials, to try and substitute his gunboats and his embargo for the sterner enginery of national defence which grown-up nations use, much as a child, with his toy weapons, might try to fight the battles of grown-up men. It waned as the ministers and successors of Jefferson learned the meaner and forgot the vaster opportunities of their high station, but with a fiercer uprising it bore Jackson into the White House, to have his will upon the enemies whom he fancied to be also the betrayers of the people's trust, to tear down much that had been patiently builded, and to lay the foundations of a rougher but firmer edifice of popular government. It recoiled from the immediate sharp consequences of his ignorant though essentially right-purposed use of his tremendous power, and waned again before the new issue of slavery, because it is rather an instructed benevolence than a primary instinct of human brotherhood that makes white men rebel against the Ethiopian's wrongs. Lulled by the prosperity of later years, it did not again exhibit its might

until, at Chicago in 1896, it once more seized upon the party always readiest to accept its control and hurried it along new paths toward the same unknown goal.

So far as Bryanism was a definite programme, it was contrary to many Democratic precedents, it antagonized many interests which have always looked to the Democratic party for defence. But so far as it was a popular movement, so far as it was an affair of impulse, so far as it reflects character, it did not essentially differ from any confessedly Democratic uprising of the past. To cry out against inequalities, whether of wealth or power, and to try, by some such device as an income tax or cheap money, to shift the burden on to the shoulders of the rich; to look with suspicion upon that department of government, the judiciary, which is least responsive to popular moods; to entertain wild ideas about public finance, which of all governmental work is the hardest to make plain to the popular mind—these are all genuinely Democratic impulses. They may all be dangerous, all unwise as policies, but they are all Jeffersonian and Jacksonian, they are all manifestations of

the same spirit that won us our independence as a community and our large freedom as individuals. To resist them may be a duty, but to despair because of them is apostasy to Democracy itself.

It is equally true that the present foreign and colonial policy of the Republican party, however the McKinley administration may have seemed to drift into it, is yet in keeping with its past, while the cry against imperialism and a large standing army, however naturally any opposition might have taken it up, would have rung less true from Republican lips. Democratic administrations have waged wars and annexed territory; but a vigorous foreign policy, a colonial system, is no more characteristic of the Democratic party here than it is of the Liberal party in Great Britain. It is the strong government party in both countries which most readily sins against the principle of independence in order to spread the benefits of liberty. The mass of the Northern Democrats never were heartily in sympathy with the Southern enterprise that secured Texas and California and aimed at Cuba, and that is the only truly aggres-

sive foreign policy for which the party can be held responsible. As to militarism, even our miniature armaments of former times were enough to arouse Democratic hostility. The Democratic partiality for the militia as against the regular military establishment is older than John Randolph's historical encounter with the soldiers in the playhouse, and it has had since his day other scarcely less fortunate champions in Congress.

On the other hand, the Republican party is no more military, no more imperialistic, than the Federalists were, or the Whigs; but it is ready, as they were ready, to employ the fittest available instrument for whatever work actual conditions and things done seem obviously to demand, and it is loath, as they were loath, to relinquish an unfinished task for fear of a remote disaster or for reverence of a vague generality. To use military force freely, and to have no fear of it, was characteristic of Alexander Hamilton, who left the treasury and personally accompanied the army that put down the Whiskey Rebellion; and it is just as characteristic of the Hamilton party of to-day, whose leader and

president is equally at home planning a campaign of naval strategy and leading a regiment into battle. This party is never lacking in the statesmanship of the winds and the tides; the statesmanship of the compass and the stars is more likely to be found somewhere in the confused mass of the opposition.

If these things are true, then our great political parties, reckoning Populists as extreme and errant Democrats, soon to be absorbed in the greater mass their revolt has quickened,[1] do in fact stand for a right and necessary division of the American people. That criticism, that reform, which attacks the whole system overleaps itself. A more candid and valuable criticism will point out faults and specific inconsistencies. Intelligent and candid reform will fight against that sordid commercialism which, though it avail itself of party loyalty, is yet utterly deadening to true party spirit. In so far as the independents proceed on the notion that a different sort of party division can be

[1] These words, written in 1900, are inapplicable to the situation now only in so far as the prophecy they make is already fulfilled.

deliberately accomplished, or that any future division, however brought about, will be essentially unlike the present, it can get little comfort from history. In so far, however, as they remain truly independent, emphasizing the right and duty of every citizen to make the best possible use of his ballot, their activity will tend to keep each party truer to itself, to make each play better its proper rôle in the working out of our great experiment.

A citizen so minded to use his vote will be governed in his conscientious, patriotic trimming by a consideration not merely of the men and the questions uppermost for the time being, but also of those permanent characteristics of the two parties which a longer view discloses. He will support the strong government party when he must, the free government party when he dares. In time of peril from without, he will naturally look to the party which is readiest in emergencies. When there is merely a difficult work to do, he will again look to the party which is intelligently led and which includes so large a proportion of successful Americans in its membership. In fine, he will be wise to

choose that party on all questions of immediate expediency. But whenever the essential character of the Republic is truly involved, when the question is of tendencies rather than conditions, of ideas rather than things, he will oftener turn to the teaching of Jefferson; when there is need of tearing down and building again, he may even invoke the spirit of Andrew Jackson. For there be two Jinn, two slaves of the lamp, that serve the Republic. One, the nimbler and the more intelligent, is best employed in the care of its material interests, its bodily welfare. The other, a turbulent, huge, and mighty demon, guards, with a ferocious jealousy, the twofold liberty which is its soul.

THE TASK OF THE AMERICAN HISTORIAN

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THE essays on history are a confusing sort of literature. Whoever seeks in such writings a systematic philosophy of the past or a standard of values in human experience will be woefully disappointed. What is more surprising, if one inquires solely about the right method in historical studies, the enlightenment one gets is faint and doubtful. The treatises agree in emphasizing the difficulty of the historian's task, but they do not seem to agree at all as to the nature of it, or its proper aim, or its scope, or the best way to go practically about it. Even on what is perhaps the oldest of all the questions that ever have been raised concerning it — the question, namely, whether it ought to be philosophical and interpretative, or merely narrative and accurate — there is still no consensus reached: some of the writers seeming to

feel that the historian is bound to take upon himself the fairly godlike rôle of interpreter, that is to say, teleologist, of the past, while others seem to be equally firm that he ought to hold himself with a rigorous, impersonal modesty to his lesser function of investigator and chronicler of facts.

It has been pointed out, however, that his task, even in the least expanded acceptation of it, involves a daunting exercise of judgment. Through the obvious necessity to choose from the mass of facts, he is driven upon a sort of interpretation. In the proportions of his work, in his allotments of space and emphasis, in countless unconscious manifestations of sympathy and repulsion, in his very restraints and forbearances, his attitude toward his subject is sure to be at least partially revealed. However he may strive to keep himself out of his work, he cannot do it. What he chooses to tell, and how he tells it — so much is his, is he.

And yet, unavoidable as these questions of what and how are seen to be, quite apart from the whys and wherefores, there is no closer approach to an agreement on them than

there is on the whole meaning of the past. In the entire field covered by the discussions of history, there is scarcely to be found a single *res adjudicata*, a single generally accepted canon. But the writers, differing as they do on all the specific points of controversy, do seem to be agreed, nevertheless, that there are canons, if they could only be formulated, that there is a standard, if it could only be defined. Let any historian set to work attacking the contentions of another or defending his own, and it is ten to one his language will imply that there is a way of dealing with the past which is "history" and that all other ways are wrong. The other historian's work is interesting, brilliant perhaps, he will say; or, on the other hand, he will pronounce it undeniably accurate, unimpeachably respectable, and consonantly dull. But in either case he is sure it is not "history." When, for example, Buckle announced that he had formulated a "science of history," Droysen was one of the first to explode his pretensions, and spared no ridicule in the refutation; but in that very same essay Droysen advanced many of the ideas which afterwards,

when he had collected and ordered them, he himself ventured to call "The Principles of History" (*Grundriss der Historik*).

Not long ago, it was because of inaccuracy in details that this true quality of "history" was most frequently denied to historical writings. Nowadays, one seems to hear more of insight, imagination, and sympathy; even of skill in presentation, and of literary style. But there is no agreement, probably there would be no way to phrase an agreement if one were reached, concerning the relative importance of these two parts or aspects of historical work. Perhaps we shall never get a better saying on the matter than a quiet remark of Parkman's in his introduction to what is still, on the whole, the best performance any American has ever made in history. The utmost care and patience in the study of all available sources of information is, he said, indispensable — and inadequate. The debate between the philosophers and the story-tellers, between the "dry-as-dusts" and the "romancers," will doubtless go on so long as history shall continue to be written at all.

Three books which have appeared within the

year invite Americans who care about the history of their own country to an interchange of views on the question of the best way to tell it. President Woodrow Wilson has essayed to cover the entire field in a single narrative of moderate length. A number of English and American scholars have collaborated to the same end in a group of narratives and essays which make up the seventh volume of "The Cambridge Modern History," planned by the late Lord Acton. With the posthumous publication of John Fiske's "Essays, Historical and Literary," we have before us, it seems, all that we shall ever have from the pen of a very pleasing writer who has left untouched scarcely any period of our American past. It happens, too, that President Wilson, in an essay published some years ago, Lord Acton, in his inaugural discourse as Regius Professor at Cambridge, and Fiske, in one of the papers in these last two volumes of his, have all three set forth their views of historical work.

It is scarcely to be hoped, however, that the latest example of the coöperative method in history will help us, otherwise than negatively,

to a notion of what the best possible history of the United States will be like; for the best possible history will not, one feels sure, prove to be a coöperative enterprise. Even the late Justin Winsor, though himself the editor of the most important coöperative work we have, freely admitted that no conceivable advantage of co-operation would ever compensate for the disappearance of the personal historian. For, after all, a coöperative history can be nothing more than a group of separate histories, or of separate essays, or of both. There is an obvious convenience in such a collection, so arranged as to make a complete survey of a subject or a period, but it is preposterous to suppose that the extremely difficult problem of historical presentation has been solved by so simple and mechanical a device. It was the individual contributors to the seventh volume of "The Cambridge Modern History" who had to face that problem, not the editors. To compare these contributors' several styles and methods would be a more practical approach to it than to attempt a judgment of the entire volume. The principle of *E pluribus unum*

will not deliver even an American historian from his vexations.

But the style and method of the better known of these writers is more fully exhibited in books which are wholly their own. When we have made every possible concession to the encyclopedical plan, it remains true that a man will ordinarily write his own book better than he will write a part of a book which is not to be all his own. To consider carefully President Wilson's history and the way he wrote it, to take account of that part of John Fiske's life-work which began with his "Old South Lectures" and ended, "shorn and parcelled," in the fragmentary essays now before us, is a better way to approach the particular problem of the American historian than any we can find through the labors of Lord Acton and his successors.

One need not be of the number of those contemporaries of Fiske who, adding to a tithe of his ability neither greater industry nor a higher purpose, have consistently decried his work in history, in order to perceive that these two volumes will not strengthen his claim to a high place among historians. A sincere ad-

mirer may very well question the propriety of publishing in this form papers which were originally prepared for other uses and connections. One might even question the wisdom of publishing at all several which are, apparently, little more than working models. At least, however, their appearance may serve to assure us that nothing of Fiske's which ought to be given to the public is withheld.

The essay on New and Old Ways of Treating History is one of those which seem unfinished; it can hardly be taken as a complete setting forth of his own view of his work. To treat it controversially would therefore be unfair. Its principal value is in the light it throws on his own method in history, particularly if we consider it with a constant reference in our minds to the author's actual performance. Fortunately, perhaps, for himself and for the quality of his work, Fiske, though much of his time was given to lecturing, never, I believe, at any time, conducted a seminary course in investigation. One may well suppose, however, that if he had ever sat at the head of a seminary table and talked with the students gathered about him on the

general aspects of their work and his, he would have talked as he has written in this paper.

It is significant, even though we take the discourse to be incomplete, that there is scarcely a word in it on the *writing* of history. So far, it confirms the strongest impression which the present writer got from hearing Fiske talk. For my instant reflection on first hearing him was that I understood at last how he wrote as he did. He talked the same way. It is entirely probable that he could neither have talked nor written any other way if he had tried. Once, when he and Justin Winsor spoke in public on the same occasion — a meeting held in memory of Parkman — the contrast between the two in the matter of naturalness was very marked.

The contrast in the same respect between the narrative styles of Fiske and of President Wilson is scarcely less marked. In the final sentence of his essay on The Truth of the Matter, in "Mere Literature," President Wilson said: "There is an art of lying: there is equally an art, — an infinitely more difficult art, — of telling the truth." One feels, however, concerning Fiske, that if he exercised any art whatever in writing

history, it was an extraordinarily unconscious sort of art. If there was any conscious art at all, then it must have been profoundly subtle — far too subtle to be reconciled with one's impression of the man himself — to attain so completely the effect of artlessness. Several of these last papers of his are, as I have said, mere rough sketches and outlines, based on incomplete investigation, which he would surely have changed and amplified. But no one in the least familiar with his finished work could doubt for a moment that they are his. The style is no more to be mistaken than his voice was or his handwriting. To write in any other style would have been, for him, like disguising his handwriting or his voice. In the presentation of his thought he was as free from artifice, not to speak of affectation, as a peasant or a king. There is neither straining nor restraint. He is never dull, but one would scarcely use such a word as "brilliant" to describe his happiest effects.

"Brilliant" is on the other hand the very first word one applies to the work of President Wilson. That praise cannot be denied, or spared. And it is impossible to believe that the effect is

attained unconsciously, as a sort of unearned increment of his labors in the searching out and setting forth of the truth. One feels that, however well he has builded, he builded no better than he knew. Perhaps the keenest and quickest mind now at play on our American past, confessedly regardful of all that can be done by way of impressionistic statement, he was, one would say, the best writer we had among us to try, with a narrative of the whole course of our development, an experiment of that particular theory of historical composition which he himself had so eloquently advanced. For in the days when the German influence was at its strongest in all our academic circles, when the document bade fair to win here the same sort of dominance which it had already at the German universities, when the historians of both continents seemed to be trying, as Lord Acton acquiescingly explained, "to develop learning at the expense of writing," and to elevate history by subduing the historian, Wilson's work was to many of us, like Fiske's, a source of comfort and of hope. He continued steadfastly to regard history as a branch of literature rather

than of science and to treat scholarship as a means, not an end. But a great and successful attempt in narrative history would have done more to establish his position than any reasoning or eloquence could do. The attempt which he has made was certainly big enough. It was so big, in truth, that one might consider he was courting absolute success or failure when he set about it.

But history is no more the domain of the absolute than politics — or life. We need not use such a word as "failure" when we admit that the adherents of the document will possibly find in minor inaccuracies of President Wilson's work more to confirm them in their loyalty than we can find in its larger merits to fortify us in our different faith. To contribute fresh details of knowledge was, apparently, no part of the design, nor can it have been a principal ambition of the author to keep his work immaculately free from little mistakes. But the book, fair as it is on points of controversy, spacious and catholic and guiltless of conscious partisanship, and everywhere of a lively intelligence, is nowhere profoundly philosophical or sagacious.

Readable it is, also — particularly if one take it by episodes and topics, less so if one go on sturdily to the end; but it does not stir, absorb, elevate, depress. It is welcome, for no other book at all comparable to it covers the whole great field, — welcome even in the cheapening dress, garish with frippery, unedifying illustrations, in which the publishers have clothed it. But if we try it by the simplest test, the only test which the mass of readers ever employ, the test by which we all form our genuine opinions of books, however we may afterwards elaborate and sophisticate the matter, — the test of its hold on our own attention, the appeal it makes to our own intelligence and sympathies, — we do not think of setting it beside the work, say, of Parkman in American or of Green in English history.

If we go on to account for our feeling, we may very well reflect that these two, like other still more famous historians, gave to their tasks an extraordinarily complete devotion, pursuing them through years of patient toil; and it is but fair to consider that in a singularly varied and active academic career like President Wilson's — the academic career in America being

what it is — such absorption in a single task may have been simply impossible. The fame of a historian is not to be won by any but the longest of wooings. It is scarcely too much to say that no really great work in history was ever less than a life-work. Even a lifetime may be vainly devoted to this ambition, and the highest powers wasted in it, unless either fate vouchsafe the man his share of ordinary human incitements to do his best, and spare him the worst temptations to despair, or else there be in the man himself a singular fixedness of purpose. So much of good fortune or of character being granted, it is not alone in the erudition of his work, but in the entire quality of it, that the sacrifice of his years will be found to have availed. Even for the unprepared reader, careless of footnotes, it will not have been in vain. It will be made plain not merely in the impregnable accuracy of the narrative, but in the tone and elevation of it, as in that "air of matured power, of grave and melancholy reflection," which Macaulay praised in Thucydides.

The mere fact that he cannot have been long

about it is enough, no doubt, to account for much of our disappointment in President Wilson's performance. But when we have said all that can be said on that score, his manner and style in narrative, particularly if we contrast it with the manner and style of Fiske, is a matter of much interest. It is not merely that these two, whom many of us would choose from among our most recent historians to compare with those historians of other countries who have written as men of letters, may have held differing views concerning the best way to write about the past. We should, no doubt, be very careful not to overestimate the importance, in their actual work, of whatever theories they may respectively have held. We know too well that writers very often break the rules they set themselves, and to the bettering of their books. Here, however, there are not merely two theories or plans of historical composition, but two ways of writing history, which differ quite plainly. It should not be entirely impracticable to take account of the difference with a reasonable sureness of our ground, notwithstanding that the matter is complicated by many other considera-

tions which should enter into a complete comparison of the two historians.

A comparison solely in the respect of manner and style in narrative must, I think, prove favorable to Fiske. President Wilson's writing is more likely to impress the reader with the author's parts than Fiske's is. That is why we call it brilliant. It shines. But the story itself does not in his hands hold the reader as it does in Fiske's. The continuous succession of skilful sentences has, in fact, a tendency to draw one's attention away from the matter in them. They sometimes come between the reader and the story they were meant to tell; and after all it is the story, not the English, which one ordinarily sets out to read. One naturally asks, therefore, why it is that a writer of such gifts and sympathies as President Wilson has shown, certainly not unmindful that brilliancy may be a fault in a historian, and bent, no doubt, on suiting the manner to the matter, the tone to the occasions, the pace to the progress of the theme, — why he has not succeeded better in a thing which he had so carefully studied out the best way to do. Putting the

matter as simply as possible, why do we find that his way of telling us about the past is not, on the whole, so good a way as Fiske's, whose way was, apparently, to tell it as he talked?

Of course, we are speaking now of two narrative styles, and for the moment our consideration of them need not be affected by the circumstance that they are employed in American history. All that we can decide, perhaps, is what one so frequently decides when similar questions are raised — that the simpler, the more natural style proves in the long run the more acceptable. We might, however, go a little further, and find in the present instance one more reason to define literary style as a gift, a characteristic, rather than an attainment; as a thing comparable to one's physical bearing, to the trick of one's gait. For President Wilson, who could doubtless come nearer telling us how and why he writes as he does than Fiske could have told us the same things about himself, — though he is more of a stylist, perhaps, than Fiske was, — has a less distinctive and habitual style of his own than Fiske had. What he writes to-day is not so sure to read like what he wrote yesterday or ten years ago.

But the point which is of most value seems to be this: one may indorse every dictum in President Wilson's essay as to what is desirable in narrative writing, and still conclude that the truth of the matter, like "the truth of history," is beyond our ken. Take, for example, the general proposition which seems to run through his whole contention, that what the historian as a matter of fact does is to convey impressions of the past. It can hardly be gainsaid. But if we go on to argue that the historian's method should therefore be impressionistic, what we know of the method of great narrators, great story-tellers, makes us doubt that we are leaving something out of the reckoning. That something, I should be inclined to say, is nature. Was Scott an impressionist—with his "big bow-wow"? Or Macaulay, who was so lacking in subtlety? Or Froissart? Or Herodotus? If our reasoning were correct, should we not have to decide that even to a historian a marked style of his own must prove an encumbrance—a thing to be got rid of altogether? Must not he also, like the dramatist, make use of all styles, but have none of his own?

Here, I think, the peculiar nature of the historian's task, the distinctive characteristics of history as a branch of literature, must come into the argument. They have an important bearing on the question of style. For the historian's aim is not, after all, purely artistic, purely literary. Granted that to do his work the best way he must be an artist, there is always upon him the duty of loyalty to another sort of truth than the truth of art. His imagination must serve, not control. He is bound to tell the plain truth also; to tell us what actually happened, not merely to show us what might have happened, in former times. Committed thus to the known facts, he is also hedged about by ignorance. Granted that through the powers of imagination he may see his subject as the artist does, that he may see the past as a sort of whole, he has not the freedom to deal with it as he might if he were solely the artist. The difference between his task and those of his fellows, the novelists, the dramatists, the poets, consists, I think, chiefly in the obligation he is always under to distinguish between so much of the whole as he can know in ordinary

ways and so much as he can only imagine or divine. His conscience will keep him aware of the obligation, the restraint, though he may never have reasoned it out; and the effect will be to keep within comparatively narrow bounds any impressionism he may employ. Carlyle's observation concerning narrative as a means to represent the past, that it is only a line, and must go straight on, while life stretches out in all directions, is also of moment. Whatever of impressionism is possible to the mere narrator must be accomplished with little of reproduction, little of verisimilitude, since his representation of the past will always lack two dimensions. In any attempt to define the sort of writing about the past which is "history," we must, I think, begin by admitting that history can only represent or exhibit the past by the use of facts that are known. A narrative falls short of being history if it fails to convey a real knowledge and sense of the past; but it goes beyond the function and privilege of history if it displays for facts things that are not known in ordinary ways.

And the peculiar obligation and restraint of

the historian, considered thus as an artist, affects the manner no less than the matter of his discourse. He is bound to be frank with his readers, as the poet and novelist is not. He will find, or his readers will, that he serves them best, his limitations being what they are, by speaking with his own voice and in his natural manner; by giving to all his own impressions of the past a natural expression, and trusting them in turn to work in a natural way their right impression on other minds. As compared with other artists in literature, he is at too great a disadvantage in respect of his rights with his subject to take such liberties with his readers as they take with theirs.

And this, I think, is the plan and method in historical narration which the best examples likewise commend to us; this is the way and wont of the best story-tellers who try to tell the truth, whether with the pen or by word of mouth. Nor does it, as a matter of fact, make so great a difference that the historian nowadays writes his story down for such as may care to read it, instead of reciting it before an audience as he once did. Let it be

read aloud, and it will not seem so changed as to indicate that the art of writing it is essentially different from the art of telling it. The possibilities of impressionism, of illusion, are hardly greater in the written discourse than in the spoken. They are probably not so great. In either case, the historian remains simply a narrator, a teller. Such devices, for example, as President Wilson suggests when he tells us that one should set forth the events of a past time as if one were living in the midst of them, seem to me as false art in the one case as in the other. That would be more like acting. To be consistent, ought not one also, if one were reciting before an audience, to wear the dress of one's period, speak its language? Speaking or writing, ought not one to discard all knowledge which the men of that period had not, and every habit of thought which did not belong to the period and characterize it? With all the things which were characteristic of his period the historian ought, no doubt, to be familiar. It were well, if it were possible, that he should be so familiar with them that he could in

imagination live the very life which he portrays. But for him they are none the less things to be told, not to be lived, just as the events are to be told and not to be acted.

And in the mere telling there lies his great and sufficient opportunity. To protest against whatever goes beyond the mere telling as savoring of artifice and mummery, to deprecate any attempt at what one might call historical ventriloquism, as likely to result in nothing more than a sort of speaking in undertones and overtones and out of the side of one's mouth, — this is by no means to belittle the true art of narrative. On the contrary, I for one should be disposed to emphasize the adequacy of straightforward, frank, natural telling to convey the knowledge and the vision of the past. Surely, recent writers of history have not gained, in comparison with the great and simple masters, by resorting to the devices of the novelist and the playwright — devices which in fiction and the drama are no doubt right and proper, but which in history are like darkening the room in the daytime and bringing in the candles.

Impressionism in history is too suggestive of the use of stimulants to heighten our interest, or of hypnotism to get us over time and space. The real masters of narrative move us profoundly without such artifice. They are entirely respectful to time and space. They spread no magic carpet for our feet, make no pretense of transporting us into other lands and ages. They stand frankly beside us on our own ground, in our own time, and look back with us "over the centuries and the seas."

I cannot but question, therefore, whether it ever is advisable, or even permissible, to employ in history any sort of illusion whatsoever. Attempts in that way to heighten the reader's interest and arouse his enthusiasm, to vivify the representation of the past, or to convey subtly, by suggestion, what it may be hard to set forth plainly, will sometimes, for a little while, seem to be successful. But in the repetition they are sure to grow tiresome. Effects so obtained fall short of that power and permanence which belong only to the natural. However strongly the historian may by reasoning and by the analogy

of other arts convince himself that they are legitimate, his conscience will still be prompting him another way. In so far as the discussions of history aim to enlarge the scope and increase the power of narrative by the discovery of new ways to tell truth about the past, I am persuaded that they are vain.

The peculiar restraint which is imposed upon the historian, and which commends to him the natural and frank style in narrative, is scarcely less an ethical than an artistic restraint. To state what it is, clearly and precisely, is difficult; but the essence of it is, that he cannot exercise anything like authority over his subject. And that, certainly, is the feeling into which one comes after prolonged study of the past. No historian can ever attain such a mastery of the past, or any part of it, as to justify him in departing entirely from that specific information concerning it, those facts and characteristics, through which he has arrived at his own partial understanding of it, in order to present it more convincingly to other minds. If he can only make his reader sure of what things happened, and from what reasonable

causes, and after what fashion of occurrence, if he can convey a sense of it comparable to our imperfect sense of the present, he will do well. Any such insight and hindsight and foresight as they attempt who would fain discover for us "the meaning of history" would imply nothing less than a complete mastery, not of the past alone, but of all human life. It would carry along with it all science and all theology. And he who pretends to understand completely any part of the past, to see the plan and the entire meaning of it, pretends no less than if he claimed to understand the whole. For where is he to stop if he begin to interpret past life in that omniscient way? Surely it is better, if one attempt interpretation at all, to proceed after the modest, ever inquiring way of the masters, not in history alone, but in science as well — neither assuming nor denying that there is a comprehensive plan. If the historian have a conviction, he will do better to give it as a conviction, and nothing more, than to work it so intimately into the narrative that it cannot be disentangled and considered by itself. To exercise so great authority as that over his subject,

and take so great a liberty with the mind of his reader, is not honest, even in a master; it matters not whether in that unfair way he seeks merely to make his story more impressive, or, like Macaulay, to justify a party, or even to establish more firmly the bases of the moral order in society. The reader, if he once discover the practice, will not condone it, however he may seem to profit by it. To rest upon authority is pleasant, no doubt, but the sense of security which comes after a while from the perfect honesty of one's guide is in the long run far better. It is the things that are told us in the simplest honesty, with whatever confessions of ignorance honesty may demand, that really help us most to understand the life about us; and I know no reason why the same thing should not be true of past life. Perhaps it is a peculiar and extreme instance of this sort of honesty in history which we find in the career of the late Lord Acton. For he believed, it seems, in the deep moral significance of history, and held the goal of all historical studies to be nothing less than a complete interpretation of the past and the laying bare of the whole plan

of the development of society. But though he himself spent his lifetime in the investigation of countless sources and in all manner of diligent inquiry, he never was satisfied with his mastery of any subject or period, and never would publish a book. His modesty was no doubt excessive, but one cannot live long in this world without coming to associate a degree of humility with any high form of honesty or of competence. It is they who see the deepest into life who keep the most of wonder in their eyes.

And if frankness, naturalness, straightforwardness, do conduce to the value of historical narrative, and conduce also, on the whole, to the interest and the charm of it, they are not less conducive to another effect which at its best it has in common with all literature, and indeed all art. I mean, the effect of making life and our own kind more impressive than we ordinarily find them; of enlarging and ennobling them. For it is true that we take life and humanity in art otherwise than we take them in our daily experience. It is not our wont, unless we ourselves are artists, to invest the men and women about us with all that

dignity and mystery and largeness which human beings wear in great pictures and statues and great books. Of course, the observation is far from new; but it deserves to be considered when one inquires how it is best to treat the past. For it can scarcely be questioned that the historian may and frequently does accomplish in this respect what artists in other sorts commonly accomplish.

Apart from the question how he does it, the question whether he ought to do it, the question of truthfulness, may not unreasonably be raised. Is it not incumbent on him, we might ask, to avoid this particular effect altogether, as he must avoid other delusions and illusions, and to keep humanity and life in the same perspective in which we ordinarily see them, and portray them in the light and on the scale of every day? Will not the duty of fairness, of impartiality, which forbids him to champion and glorify particular men and causes, forbid him likewise even this partisanship, as one might say, of his whole subject?

If it were so judged, the historian might well plead, in excuse, along with the entire company of artists in every sort, a very high temptation. For it cannot be doubted that in this effect art plays to our nobleness and not our vileness; and to derive that larger sense of things from history is to be peculiarly fortified in all our worthier part. It is tonical to our bravest aspirations. And conversely, there is no other way to weaken the higher purposes of men half so effective as to induce in them the habit of seeing life as a mean affair of chance and physical reactions. Even to reason that there is no moral order whatsoever in the universe is not so hurtful to the moral standards of men as it is to make them see themselves and all their fellows alike as but little things.

But perhaps a better defence for the historian who seems thus to enlarge his subject would be to point out that any serious study and careful record of the past of the race is absurd, and a waste of time, unless one has already a high conception of humanity and finds in life a great dignity and nobleness.

There are, no doubt, practical uses of a knowledge of the past, but it is not for these that men give themselves to the study of it with that great singleness and devotion which any considerable achievement in history requires. It is from a high and grave curiosity concerning it, rather than any distinctly practical purpose, that the historian sticks to his endless task. True, there are investigators of the past — chiefly men of the documentary and institutional school — whose work neither reflects such a feeling in themselves nor arouses it in their readers. But these men are not historians in the sense that they reproduce or represent the past or portray humanity at all. Perhaps this also is part of the distinction we may make between those writers on history who are historians and those who are not: that the one sort do and the other sort do not pursue their labors from a deep and natural concern they have about humanity and all that pertains to it, from that wondering and reverent curiosity about life which is the motive and the inspiration of all art.

However that may be, the great narrative

historians certainly do make us see life as tremendous and wonderful, and men, even in their follies and their weakness, as after all entirely noteworthy creatures. The effect is as clear after reading Gibbon or Thucydides as it is after reading Homer or Dante, or when one gazes on great pictures. Perhaps a little reflection will enable us to see that, whether right or wrong, it is a natural, an inevitable effect of seeing life and humanity well portrayed in any form. For what the portrayal, the artistic reproduction, does for us is to arrest for our completer observation what in ordinary experience we see but partially, or see when we ourselves are so distracted, so incompletely given to the observation, that much of it escapes us. Our taking note of it was no such scrutiny and pondering as that to which the artist now invites and helps us. And that in us which now approves or disapproves his work so authoritatively that, as has often been said, the artistic truth of it is a thing to be recognized, not to be proved, is, probably, memory. For memory does ennoble and enlarge in the

same way the artist does. The incidents of yesterday, of a year ago, of one's childhood, have not, as a rule, in one's present thought of them, the pettiness and formlessness of what is now happening before one's eyes. In yesterday's meeting with my friend, nothing he said seemed noteworthy, and there was in his look and bearing little, indeed, to suggest the immensity of his individual experience or the great mystery of his life and mine. But all that will be in my thought of him now if either I look upon his portrait or memory alone bring him again before me as he moved and spoke and acted. Surely, then, we can ask no more of the narrative historian than that he deal with past life as honestly as our own memories do, nor can we blame him for magnifying his subject, since our minds, obedient to a law of their own, are forever playing us the selfsame trick — if, indeed, it is a trick. On the contrary, we are bound to recognize in this very thing — a thing to be found in all accepted art, and most apparent in the highest — the sign of his membership in the brotherhood of artists.

It is a power which he has because he is an artist and a man of genius, a power not to be won by conformity to any rule of composition; but I think little question can be made that the effect is best accomplished by those historians who write of the past in that straightforward, natural way which on other grounds also we find to be the best. Honesty and simplicity are in themselves a sort of reverence for one's subject. He who builds in perfect sincerity will always build better than he knows. He will make his subject seem larger that way than he can by any sort of authoritative manipulation of it, or any rhetorical parading to and fro before it. In these ways it may perhaps be magnified out of its right proportion to other parts of the past, but it is the simple, the natural, the entirely honest historian who invests it with the most of that magnitude and nobleness which life takes on alike in memory and in art. Compare the narratives of Homer, of Thucydides, of John Bunyan — to take at random three good examples of the manner I have in mind — with the best of the elaborative historical writing

of our own time, and no one can fail to see how much more impressive incidents and characters are in the stories which these three have to tell than they are in the hands of our contemporaries. Of course, these three were masters, and it may not be fair to compare work which by reason of extraordinary excellence has come down to us from former ages with work which only a comparable lapse of years can test completely. But there is more in the matter than the disparity between genius and ordinary talents. Few would think of mentioning Fiske's "Discovery of America" in the same breath with the narratives which age after age has continued to admire. But read his simple, straightforward, almost circumstantial account of the first voyage of Columbus, and see how far it surpasses, in the enlargement of its theme, the more elaborate and conscious attempts to impress one with the mighty issues committed to those little caravels. The manner and style of it is what is probably best described as natural; and in respect of manner and style, though not in the entire execution, it distinctly reminds one

of the famous account of the Sicilian expedition in Thucydides.

And it is from his constant use of this manner, scarcely less than from his gifts — his extraordinary memory and industry, the clearness of his reasoning, and his considerable power of imagination — that Fiske probably deserves a higher rank as a writer of history than any other American since Parkman, notwithstanding that Mr. Henry Adams and Mr. James Ford Rhodes have both mastered their particular periods as he can hardly be said to have mastered any period. On the score of diligence and honesty, little that is not praise can be said of Mr. Rhodes's work, and it has the interest also of strong feeling in the writer. His natural style, however, is not easy or graceful, and in reasoning out his conclusions he is little helped by imagination. Mr. Adams has a better gift of speech and much insight of a critical, intellectual sort; but he is lacking in sympathy and warmth.

But if, on the other hand, we compare Fiske's work with Parkman's or with J. R. Green's, his entire achievement must, I think,

be accounted less than theirs. He has not made any great subject his own, as Parkman did, nor is any part of it wrought out with that unmeasured devotion of time and talents which was so characteristic of Green. History, indeed, was not his life-work quite as it was the life-work of both the others. Nor were his gifts ever imperiously controlled and marshalled by such a deep, quiet passion as we find informing the serious literature which lasts from age to age. Right as he was to present the past as simply as he could, one sometimes feels that his vision was so clear and undisturbed only because there were things — dark things of the human spirit, contrarieties and puzzles and mysteries in men's lives and natures, and things poetical and inspiring — which he did not see at all. He was right also to tell it all in his own natural way, but even that pleasing manner of his is not a particularly distinguished manner. There is a fine dignity which it lacks. And when one reflects on the whole view and notion of the past which he presents, one finds it too easy-going. The matter seems always a little too

plain. Everything, apparently, is explained — or at least there is an implication that it could be. The course of events is too processional, too like the course of nature undisturbed by human nature. When we consider how constantly we are bewildered by what happens among our fellows, before our very eyes, we find it hard to believe that there was so little of the marvellous, the inexplicable, in all this past life which passes before us in his pages. He does not completely convince us because he does not wonder. Perhaps he never found the limitations of that scientific impulse which quickened all intellectual life so powerfully about the time when he began to write. The influence of Herbert Spencer upon him did not weaken when he turned from science and philosophy to the history of his country.

But when we compare any American with any English or continental historian we ought in fairness to keep in mind that their tasks are not altogether alike. It may not be entirely the fault of the story-teller if one story fall short of another in interest and charm; and the truth is, that in many respects the story of

the older world is a better story to tell than ours is. The English or continental historian is more fortunate in the atmosphere, in the variety of the incidents and characters with which he has to deal. He is particularly fortunate in the ascendency of human and biographical over economic and geographical motives. The fortunes of those compact European states seem to have been continually turning on the fortunes and the lives, the heroisms, loves, ambitions, of individual men and women, and this has seldom been the case in our widespread commonwealth. He is fortunate, too, in the glamour which the centuries cast upon his pages. Moreover, the artists in other sorts have in a measure prepared the way for him to the sympathy of his readers. Poets and dramatists, painters and sculptors, have given to many of his themes an accessory charm. Spread over the entire surface of his continent and its islands are countless monuments and ruins which are forever turning the thoughts of men backward.

Writing in a land where nothing is so rare as ruins, for a people whose faces are set to the

future, and telling a story in which the vastness of the field of action and the play of great material forces tend to dwarf the human figures, a story in which it is seldom permissible to introduce the entire lives and portray the complete characters of individuals, the American historian has not so good an opportunity for many of the effects which have been as common in history as in other forms of literature. The range of motives is not so wide. Human nature is, perhaps, not so variously exhibited. The interest of it all is less intense and passionate. The springs of laughter and of tears are seldom reached. To many of our deepest individual experiences it scarcely relates itself at all. Now and then, as in Franklin, Washington, Hamilton, Lincoln, Lee, we encounter fascinating or impressive characters, but for the most part the men who come before us arouse more interest in their causes than in themselves. Women and children we hardly ever see at all. Our concern is less with incidents than with movements and conditions, less with individuals than with the mass. We feel ourselves to be studying races and

mankind. The fact that scarcely a single good poem or good play, and until very recent years scarcely a single good monument or statue, has dealt with an episode of American history is significant. It means more, perhaps, than that the arts are backward among us. To the American historian it means, at least, that he will not find the popular imagination quickened to his theme. It may also mean that his material is not so fit for any sort of artistic handling as the history of older lands.

But until a master has dealt with it we cannot know that this is true. If there were a master, he might convince us that the interest and charm of the story is only different. For it does not, indeed, seem altogether reasonable to suppose that in the discovery, peopling, and partitioning of a whole continent, in the setting up of so many states, in our revolutions, wars, and swift upgrowth to a colossal stature of nationality, there is any dearth of material for art. Perhaps, under wise tutelage, we shall come to see in the magnitude of the theme, the spaciousness of the field, the epical directness and simplicity of the action, full compensation for the

lack of any such dramatic intensity of interest as one finds in the history of France, let us say, or of Greece. For the mystery which antiquity sheds upon the stories of these older lands, we have, everywhere throughout the story of our own land, prophetic intimations of things in our future that shall be greater than any in their past. It is, no doubt, through a fixed habit of thought, but a habit which we in America may conceivably come to change, that human affairs seem to derive a greater dignity from the remoteness of their origins than from the equal twilight of their ends and outcomes. There is no sufficient reason why we should be more impressed with ruins and memorials than with harbingers and portents. Life is but life, nor should it greatly matter with which of the two eternities it is shadowed.

But whatever difference of values there may be in his theme, as compared with others, the American historian is unwise if he attempts to set them forth with any new manner and method. For him, as for all historians of comparatively recent times, it is necessary, no doubt, to take account of many things which

the historians of earlier stages of civilization, when science had made but little progress, did not need to consider. He will be drawn to generalize as they, with their scanter means of information, could not. He will also have to treat of material forces, of institutions, and of races, far more extensively than the historians of smaller and more homogeneous states. For these reasons, he may very likely find Gibbon a better model, on the whole, than Thucydides. But that he will need to exercise any new art, to find any way of telling about the past essentially different from the way of the earliest and best narrators, I cannot believe. Though he will have more to tell than they, the addition will be of little moment as compared with those great permanent elements of all history with which they also dealt. His story, like theirs, will be a story of men that lived before our time; of what manner of men they were, and what they did, and of what sort of world they lived in, and how they changed it into the world we live in now. He will do best, he will do supremely well, if he tell his story as they told theirs; simply,

so that we may understand; honestly and truthfully, so that we may profit by it; naturally, because we will like it best if he tell it in his own way; seriously and reverently, because he will be speaking of the dead.

THE GREAT OCCASIONS OF AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

"To the University of Oxford *I* acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son, as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life."

— EDWARD GIBBON, *Memoirs of My Life and Writings.*

"And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection, — to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side? — nearer, perhaps, than all the science of Tübingen."

— MATTHEW ARNOLD, Preface to *Essays in Criticism.*

"There is not a man that has passed through that great and famous university that can say with more truth than I can say, I love her from the bottom of my heart."

— GLADSTONE at Oxford, *February* 5, 1890.

THE GREAT OCCASIONS OF AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

"THE world is the ocean, and Isis and Charwell are but little drops, of which the sea takes no account." So Mr. Joseph Addison is made to say in "Henry Esmond." But he would scarcely have fallen into that reflection a month later, when his "Campaign" had proved as victorious in its way as my Lord Marlborough's, which it celebrated. At any rate, no American familiar with English biography and literature can think that the remark is just. On the contrary, one marvels that so many admirable lives of Englishmen, whether they were real lives or only fictions of other famous Englishmen's imaginations — but not, for that reason, any the less real to us — should be associated in our minds with those two little streams and with the Cam. Much, indeed, of what to us is most precious in English history, as in our

common literature, seems to us to have had its sources in Oxford or in Cambridge. Whether England, still unvisited, be but a dream, or have passed forever to a great place in one's memories, much of its charm and radiance would be lost for our spirits if there melted out of the dream or the memory the towers, the trees, the quiet walks and waters, of those two ancient universities. The universities of Germany did for a while usurp in our own centres of learning that practical influence which the English might more naturally have exercised; but even if Berlin and Göttingen and Heidelberg and the rest had brought into our intellectual life a less prosaic teaching than they did, or set us more alluring standards, or sent us over more inspiring representatives, they could never have driven Oxford and Cambridge from the place they keep in our imaginations.

Nor have our own universities ever come to rival them in such a way that we could cavil at the form which the patriotism of Mr. Cecil Rhodes took in his will. His dream of making Oxford a source of inspiration and a centre of unity to his entire race can offend

no American of English blood that does not forget learning and poetry and virtue, and think only of strength, when he glories in his birthright. It is true that the founders and the early governors of our oldest college in America, themselves, to a considerable number, bachelors and masters of the English Cambridge, began with the purpose to make of it an establishment like those unit colleges which both Cambridge and Oxford were composed of; at least, that was the conclusion which the writer reached after some study of Harvard's beginnings. But the colonial college has grown into a university in a way of its own, not by the English plan of multiplication. That Harvard did not continue to model itself after either Oxford or Cambridge, but has a form and life unlike theirs in many ways, and that its fellows in America have generally followed its lead, is one reason why the place which they have together in America is unlike the place which Oxford and Cambridge have in England, and why to these two there is still left so considerable an authority and sway over our imaginations. Another

reason is to be found in a variety and diversity of interests, traits, standards, points of view, and racial strains among us, so great that possibly we shall never have common centres of intellectual life entirely comparable to those which from time to time have formed themselves in the various countries of Europe.

But different as the place is which universities have in America, it can scarcely be called a lower place than that they have in England or on the continent. The part they have played and continue to play in our experiment of liberty, in our progress toward national solidarity and our advance to international rank and power, is a thing with which even foreign observers have been much impressed. The visit of Prince Henry of Prussia to Harvard, and the gift he brought from his imperial brother, was but one of many marks of that distinguished consideration which those who from the outside take the most careful thought of things American give to what may be called our academic estate. Nor are we ourselves unmindful of this force and influence in our civilization. On the contrary, it is doubtful if ever before there was

displayed such munificence to colleges and universities as wealthy Americans are nowadays displaying. Millionnaire citizens of the Republic are playing with a steady increase of generosity the part of those royal and noble and ecclesiastical patrons to whom, in the older world, learning is still indebted for its stateliest temples. The scale of this munificence may be judged from the fact that in more cases than one an entire university establishment has arisen in America through the bounty of an untitled individual, whereas at Oxford and Cambridge it is seldom more than a single hall or college that bears the name of any one benefactor. And if it be considered that only a false and careless nomenclature would accord the style of university to these swift realizations of our millionnaires' uninstructed benevolence, the misnomer is more commonly due to the lack of other unpurchasable attributes than to any scantiness of the material endowment. There is a story of a Western railroad king who at the end of a day conscientiously devoted to an inspection of Harvard requested its President, with a magnificent directness, to name the figure at

which he could "duplicate the plant" on the other side of the continent.

There are, it is true, but three or four places in America where the natural currents of civilization, flowing for centuries, have brought together all those elements of the full complement and the complete character of a university which Cardinal Newman has set forth better than any other writer in English. But of these places it is not unreasonable to suppose that they draw to themselves a greater share of the people's reverence for the old, the established, the continuous, than places of learning do in other countries. They profit by the scarcity of antiquities in America, for there are few other places on the whole continent that are seats of any sort of immaterial authority or enveloped in any atmosphere of tradition. Neither the temporal nor the spiritual power has anywhere established itself so impressively by mere permanence of station as in a few cases the intellectual has. Minds that would rest upon something other than the things of the passing day find in the quiet of three or four academic closes a repose and a sense of stability and permanence in

human concerns which in America no palace keeps for them, and no cathedrals.

But that true universities are a growth, a natural, perhaps inevitable growth of civilization, and not to be had any otherwise than as the gift of centuries, the gradual deposit of countless material and intellectual and spiritual confluences, is a thing too little understood among a people flattered into the notion that there is nothing whatsoever they cannot either build or buy. Americans are as slow to accept the principle that learning will follow its own channels and find its own centres of high exchange and barter as they are to acknowledge the like principle of trade. The President of Harvard, though a man given to categorical statement — and gifted in it — would have found it hard to enumerate for his visitor those features of his "plant" which, because they were entirely unique, and covered, from the circumstance of their slow origination, with a sort of perpetual copyright and patent, could not possibly be duplicated anywhere. There was the place itself, with a physical aspect which no other region than eastern New England could

ever present, and a human quality which only two and a half centuries of New England history could ever have given it. There was the peculiar civilization from which the University still drew the very juices of its life, and took the fashion of its aspirations. There was a station and a function traditionally defined for it in the serious business of a state, of a section, and now of the nation. There was a character which the University itself had gradually but firmly taken on, as distinct as the state's or as New England's. There was a vast amount of human living and dying, of work and courage and love and sacrifice, accomplished, but not done with. It was by reason of these things that the fame of the place had come slowly to shine out over the whole land, and even into other lands, across the seas, drawing from all quarters choice youth to learn and eminent savants to teach and to inquire.

It is the place of which these things are true; the place, rather than the institution. There is much to be said in favor of the view, several times advanced, and once stubbornly maintained by no less a person than President

Edward Everett, that the proper style of the institution is The University of Cambridge, while the name of Harvard belongs of right only to the College. That controversy is no longer even academic, but the English and foreign usage which was followed by the College of New Jersey when it became the University of Princeton is more logical than Harvard's. There are many things in Cambridge which, though they are not parts of the institution, have, nevertheless, an important part in the true life of the University. It is impossible to conceive of the University as set down anywhere else, and still preserving its identity. It cannot be disembodied.

To know Harvard, visited or unvisited, is to know a place, as invariably we see a place when we speak of Oxford or the English Cambridge. It is to let one's eyes sweep from the hill of Mt. Auburn, where lie so many of Harvard's sons, down the wavering line of the Charles to where it broadens into the bay, and on to the seven hills of Boston. It is to stroll along the quiet streets of the town where more famous American writers have

lived than in any other, past the Common, where the first American army was first encamped, and the burial-ground where lie more of the scholars of colonial times than in any other ground, and the meeting-house of our most learned parish, and to enter — nowadays, through a great brick and iron gateway — that campus or "yard" in which, ever since the year 1636, a considerable body of students has made its home.

The enclosure into which one immediately looks is a long quadrangle, defined on the left by rectangular red brick buildings, old, but unpoetical, and on the right by newer edifices equally lacking in artistic charm. University Hall, directly opposite the entrance, shuts off the view of a second quadrangle not quite so accurate in its lines, and incompletely enclosed by still newer buildings. Over to the left, one glimpses, through the elms which fill both quadrangles, the tower of Memorial Hall. In the neighborhood of the yard and in other parts of Cambridge are many other University buildings. Several of the professional schools are in Boston. There is an observatory in

Peru. But before one's eyes is the centre of the University's life, the oldest place of learning on the continent. It is the yard, and particularly the older quadrangle, which all the sons of Harvard see when they remember their *alma mater* and their youth.

They do not all see it alike, for within the lifetime of the oldest it has known many changes. Every generation has beheld some change in it. Neither now, nor at any earlier period, could it be compared, for any stateliness or impressiveness or beauty, save only the green of the grass and the dignity of the elms, to all that stands visibly before one's eyes at Oxford or at Cambridge for the glories of English scholarship and the steadfastness of English ideals. But in its own associations and inspirations it is a place not unworthy of honor and remembrance. No American need be ashamed to speak of it when the talk is of Oxford or of Heidelberg or of Bologna. He need not blush if the occidental ardor of some fellow-countryman even assign to this leafy American Cambridge such a dignity and station among the cities of the new continent

that he will pronounce its name in the same breath with the great name of Athens.

It is in this quadrangle also, changing from time to time, that certain scenes have been enacted which have helped to win for Harvard University a great share of such reverence as we Americans have to give to institutions and to places. A university is like many things, but in the thought of its sons everywhere it is oftenest recalled, I fancy, as a sort of family mansion and estate. Harvard, so considered, is a homestead of a very distinctly New England type — at least, it was until those recent changes came about which have brought so many foreign and exotic luxuries into New England life that the insides even of the oldest New England houses will now often deride the plainness and severity of their outsides. But no New England mansion, be it of a village or of a city, is without its narrow attic chamber where some remnants, at least, of a former furnishing are stored away. My conceit is, to search out in Harvard's attic chamber what old costumes may still be found there, to fill them, as best I may, with forms that once inhabited them, and

to place and range the company as it appeared on certain occasions famous in the history of the family. I trust the notion will not seem to savor of an undue family pride. Few but the very youngest members of that great family would ever parade its honors in a way to convey to any other American a shade of offence. Happily, it is by a sense of exceptional obligation to the Republic, whose best has been set before them, that all but a very few sons of Harvard — or of Yale, or Princeton, or Columbia, for that matter — choose to consider themselves distinguished from their fellows. It is the public services which the family has rendered, and the honors which the Republic has conferred upon it, that sustain the family pride of Harvard.

It would be beyond us, I fear, to make successful play with such few mouldering gray cloaks and wide-brim hats as have come down from the earliest Harvard generations. We should never catch the stiff and solid gait of those eldest brothers of the house. Nor would the scene itself be clear to us. We do not certainly know where the founders placed that first

"College" which the author of "New England's First Fruits" tells us was thought to be "too gorgeous for a wilderness, and yet too mean in others' apprehension for a College." No engraving shows us what it was like, or what that small brick building was like which in the year 1654 was built to be a "College" for Indian youth, and in which that particular Indian youth whose difficult name stands alone for his race on the roll of graduates doubtless had his quarters. These two, and a second "College" which replaced the first, were all destroyed before the yard began to have its present look and shape at all. We would best begin at a time when a sufficient number of the older buildings still extant were already in place to effect a certain physical continuity between the colonial College and the American University of to-day.

That transition was near at hand when all the Harvard household doffed their workaday garb for the first of those occasions which have given the family so secure a standing in the eyes of Republican Americans. They were to welcome no less a personage than His Excellency, Thomas Hutchinson, and to congratulate

him, according to colonial usage, on a commission which was but lately come to him from over seas promoting him from his post of lieutenant-governor to be governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay. The new lieutenant-governor appointed in the same commission was a certain Andrew Oliver — a name which, linked by the mixing of blood with other New England names, such as Holmes and Wolcott, has come down to our own times with ever increasing distinction; while as for the governor's name, we should not find it in the records of the province far this side of the day of his visit, though we should find it often, and in worthy connections, beyond that day, and beyond the seas, whence his commission came, and whither he himself was soon to go, taking thither his report of an honorable but bootless stewardship and his unfinished history of a colony which he had served in vain only because he could not serve it at once according to its desire and his own convictions.

They two, Hutchinson and Oliver, with a retinue of province dignitaries, rode out from Boston to Cambridge on the 4th of April, 1771.

Which way they came, — whether by the ferry to Charlestown and thence along the Charlestown neck, or by the other route along the narrow Boston neck, now widened out by reclaiming the marshes from the Back Bay into Boston's fashionable quarter, — we do not know. But they came in greater style than the governor of Massachusetts puts on when nowadays he drives across the Harvard bridge, escorted by red-coated lancers, to attend Commencement. We know, too, that President Locke awaited the guests of the college on the steps of the new Harvard Hall, built but a few years earlier, after the fire of 1764 had destroyed its predecessor, along with every volume but one of the library which John Harvard gave at the beginning.

The new hall stood, as it still stands, on the left of the entrance, and facing it was the same long, rectangular, red brick Massachusetts Hall which every class since the year 1720 has known either as a dormitory or as a place of lectures. But as the cavalcade entered Governor Hutchinson did not look into any extensive enclosure. There is an old engraving

which shows us most of what he saw, though it was made thirty-five years before his visit, and was dedicated to an earlier colonial governor, who, indeed, is to be seen in it, driving past the gateway in his state carriage while horsemen to the right and left salute him with the hat or the sword. Hutchinson's view inside, like his predecessor's, was blocked by Stoughton Hall, no longer in existence, which stood in front of where University Hall is standing now, and at right angles with Harvard and Massachusetts, so that the three formed, with the fence, a small quadrangle. To the right, behind Massachusetts, was the old Cambridge Meeting House, and beyond that the president's house, a sober little wooden building which now goes by the name of President Wadsworth, the first to occupy it. To the left, behind Harvard, were two other red brick structures, also still standing, Hollis Hall and Holden Chapel, which made with Harvard three sides of another tiny quadrangle. In the middle of that quadrangle the governor may also have glimpsed a straight little sapling of an elm which twenty-five years later, as we know from another engraving, had

grown to be nearly as tall as the bell-tower on the top of Harvard Hall, and which now is known to all the sons of Harvard simply as "The Tree," and known to many others also by reason of its central prominence in a curious class-day observance, once famous but now abandoned.

That was the scene which Governor Hutchinson saw. The occasion of his visit was not clearly a great one. To understand the true significance of the reception he got, one must read between the lines of the invitation and of the president's Latin address of welcome and of the anthem sung by students; for in these tributes not one word was said about the king whom he represented. True, some of the officers and graduates had not long before composed a set of Latin and English verses, and printed them in a handsome folio which they entitled *Pietas et Gratulatio Collegii Cantabrigiensis apoud Novanglos*, and sent them to the young George III on his accession to the throne, following in this a usage of Oxford and Cambridge. But Hutchinson, himself the chronicler of his visit, tells us that by this

time the rulers of the college sympathized strongly with the cause of the colonists against the government at home. As to the student body, their feeling in the matter had been made plain much earlier by the venturesome discussions of the divine right of rulers and of the forms of government which they put into their theses at Commencements. Hutchinson was welcomed, so far as he was welcomed at all, because he was himself a Harvard man of an excellent type, a colonist of an honored family, a benefactor of the College, a good magistrate and a good historian. His portrait shows us that he had the slender build and the high-arched, thoughtful eyes of an intellectual aristocrat — a sort of aristocracy which has always held a peculiarly high place in New England society. But a certain refinement about his mouth, suggestive of weakness, makes his face seem a little foreign among the more severe countenances of his fellows on the canvases of Copley.

President Locke, who stood awaiting him, was not one of the famous presidents; his figure is so indistinct that it would be hard for us to fill

out his costume at all. Perhaps we should do no great violence to the true history of that period if we put inside his clothes the man who did indeed stand there in spirit, as he more than once stood elsewhere in the flesh, to front the representative of the king. Neither should we be doing any great injustice to the character of Samuel Adams, of the class of 1744, if we put him inside the clothes of a contemporary, for his biographer tells us that while he was giving himself to his work of agitation he frequently had to borrow from the wardrobes of his friends. Two figures which quite probably stood about the president in the flesh were John Hancock, the wealthy young merchant, and Samuel Adams's cousin, John, of the class of 1755, who had a habit of calling Samuel his brother. As to Hancock, we know that a few weeks after this the College Corporation voted him an extraordinary invitation "to dine in the hall whenever there is a public entertainment there, and to sit with the governors of the College," and that a little later, for no other cause than his patriotism and his and his father's benefactions, they elected him their treasurer. They

had plenty of time to regret it, for he would neither discharge his duties nor resign, and they never could bring him to a settlement of accounts, but had at last to deal with his heirs after his death. One of the things then recovered from his estate was the oldest of all the treasurer's books, containing the earliest accounts of the College, which was found, mouldering and worm-eaten, in the carriage-house of his mansion on Beacon Street, in front of the Common, in Boston. Servility to this republican magnate proved no more profitable than that earlier servility to the king and his representatives which on the day of Hutchinson's visit the College authorities were for the first time refusing to employ.

For Hutchinson's visit does seem to have been the first time when the quiet atmosphere of Cambridge was charged through and through with the excitement of a great historical movement. The contest already raging across the river in Boston was reënacted in that little Cambridge kingdom of the air. There was, however, one set of participants in the scene whom we cannot reproduce from any canvas

or from any chronicle. These were the students, standing in ranks to watch the great men — the governor and the president and the rest — who passed among them; and for my own part I should prefer, like some of the cartoonists in *Punch*, to put the most expression into the faces on the outskirts of the crowd. The pose of the students was not so easy for boys to carry off as it was for some of their elders; for while they lifted their caps and sang their anthem to the governor all their young enthusiasm was for Samuel Adams and his cause. While they waved their farewell to the guest of the day, they and all the rest of the College community were welcoming another guest. For that day, as Governor Hutchinson rode away, he must have known that Yankee Doodle was already come to town.

It was not long, however, before the College had occasion to receive a guest who found no such farewell mixed with his hearty welcome, for there came to Cambridge a greater than Hutchinson or Sam Adams. He came in the flesh, riding his Virginian charger as he does to-day on the monument in the Boston Public

Garden and on the one at Richmond in Virginia. What he wore and how he looked, we can learn from many portraits; but we have it on the good authority of President Josiah Quincy, who saw him on a later occasion, that the very best of them all is the one which was painted for Harvard, and now hangs in Memorial Hall. President Quincy used to say that this guest reminded him strongly of certain members of the General Court from the country districts of western Massachusetts.

However that may have been, the College prepared for him the most generous of welcomes, for it sent away the whole household to make room for him. All the students were sent to Concord, that their quarters might be given to the soldiers of the new Continental Army, and President Langdon kept for himself but one room in Wadsworth, that he might still, with some show of being a host, stand on the steps to greet his guest, to whom he surrendered all the rest of the house. The province, too, made great preparation for him, ordering, however, that all be done "without expense of powder"; and on the 29th of June, 1775, when he was

drawing near, the watchword of the camp out on the Common in front of the College was "Washington," and the countersign, "Virginia."

It was late in the afternoon of July 2 when he came riding up Tory Row from the west, province dignitaries about him and a cavalcade at his heels, crossed an open space which is now Harvard Square, and entered the low door of Wadsworth. In all probability, he went straight in, and early to bed that night, for there was work to do on the morrow, when he must ride out on the Common and take command of the troops and afterwards go and inspect the lines. That ceremony the next day is perhaps the scene which we should like the best to see; but we might find ourselves jostling too many important persons, even though we did not press very deep into the crowd. We might, for instance, find ourselves touching elbows with two Harvard poets, one of the class of 1836[1] and the other of the class of 1893,[2] both of whom, having gone back in spirit to stand in the crowd, have afterwards stood under the elm where Washington is supposed to have sat his

[1] Lowell. [2] Mr. William Vaughn Moody.

horse, and told, in excellent verse, what they had seen. Neither of them, however, was quite sure where Washington sat, and no more are we, but that should not deter us from hanging on the outskirts of the crowd, as one feels sure some Harvard students of that day had come back from Concord to do, or from baring our heads. Even if one does not quite see, over the crowd, where the great man is, or feel quite sure what is going on, it is good to bare one's head now and then in the presence of a greatness one does not completely understand. I have always respected a man from a country neighborhood whom I once led up to the Washington Elm, which stands in the middle of the street beyond the Common, and drew his attention to the ancient tree, and made him admire it for its own sake, and finally brought him round facing the inscription which assures the reader that beneath this very tree Washington took command of the American Army. He read the first line aloud, but when he came to the name of Washington he snatched off his hat, and read the rest in silence.

But for any student of the present time that wishes to stand cap in hand to Washington, and to realize that he was truly in Cambridge, and the guest of Harvard, the best place to make his obeisance is before the low door of Wadsworth. Let him pass that way late some thick winter afternoon, such as are only too common in Cambridge, when everything looks spectral and remote, and pause, and frame in that narrow passage the chief's great figure as the countless statues and portraits and descriptions have kept it for us, and try to understand, no matter what biographer he may have followed, why the president ought to have bowed lower to him than to any other guest that he or any other president ever welcomed to Harvard. That, I think, will be a better exercise of his thoughts than the Dryasdusts set him with their hacking and hammering, or the wits with their thrusting of rapiers, at the figure which is still incomparably the noblest in all our American past. One need not heed either that biographer who first began to envelope it in myths, nor that other who contends that the best claim of the first of all Americans to our human interest is

the oath he swore at Monmouth. The province legislature had a right notion of the stature of their guest, and could teach biographers a lesson in the right degree and mode of respect. Seeing that Wadsworth was too small to serve him for headquarters, they soon opened for him one of the greater houses on Tory Row, and at the same time voted, gravely, to employ a steward for him and "two or three women for cooks." As to the College, it soon made that national figure its own, much as the Player's Club in New York did when they wrote beneath his portrait "Our Leading Man." The College, for the first time in its history, wrote the letters LL.D. opposite his name in its catalogue. Its bow to him was a bow to the tallest man on the greatest horse; to the man who, of all that ever rode in any Harvard procession, knew best how to keep silent and move on.

For many a day the Harvard household was still looking back to him so often that it turned but idle eyes on any other who might pass. At length, however, one came whom it could honor for himself, but honor most of all because in him it honored the friend of Washington. He came

from over seas, but he found here the memories of his generous and ardent youth. Our love, the love of all Americans, had followed him on the other side, and one of the faces he longed the most to see again was the face of an American which he had seen but once, and for an instant only, through the bars of an Austrian prison — the face of Colonel Huger, of South Carolina, who had risked his life to free this friend of all Americans from imprisonment and danger. The portraits and descriptions show him at the time of his visit "a fine, portly figure, nearly six feet high," with a brown wig that was useful to protect him from the cold when he lifted his stiff hat to the crowds in the streets; but we prefer, as no doubt the crowds did, too, to see him as he was in the earlier portraits, when he was slender and graceful, and wore a white wig with a queue, and a cocked hat, and a sword.

He came in August, 1824, and the scene he saw is preserved for us by the accounts of many witnesses and by several pictures. When this guest entered the yard, the first Stoughton no longer blocked the view, and President

Kirkland awaited him on the steps, or on the porch (for there used to be a porch), of University Hall — a white, rectangular building in the centre of the yard. A new Stoughton reached out to the left beyond Hollis, and Holworthy turned the corner. The big quadrangle was begun. On the other side, the right, the old meeting house had moved across the street, and now only a thicket hid Wadsworth from the view.

President Kirkland, who welcomed the guest, excelled in just such functions, for his urbanity was his weakness. This time, he represented the whole university, and indeed the whole country, for Tory Row was now merely Brattle Street, and we all "surrendered" — that is the word which the best chronicler uses — to our noble guest. That particular chronicler spoke the Latin valedictory Commencement Day, and roused thunders of applause when he came to the one word in it which everybody understood — the name of the guest; but he tells us that the really great occasion was the next day, at the meeting of the Phi Beta Kappa Society. For that day Edward Everett was the orator, and

he at the end turned to the guest with a grace that no one else in all the country, not even Webster at Bunker Hill, could emulate. We will let him pronounce the name as he spoke it then, and as countless schoolboys and Boylston declaimers have tried to speak it since. "Welcome, thrice welcome to our shores!" he said. "You will revisit the hospitable shades of Mount Vernon, but him whom you venerated as we did you will not meet at its door. But whithersoever throughout the limits of the continent your course shall take you, the ear that hears you shall bless you, the eye that sees you shall bear witness to you, and every tongue exclaim with heartfelt joy, welcome, welcome, La Fayette!"

To the next guest I shall name Harvard gave no such welcome as that, for though he was not foreign to these shores, and indeed was foreign to all shores but ours, he was foreign to the air of Boston and Cambridge as even La Fayette was not. His name was better known and better liked everywhere else in America; when Harvard wrote it under Washington's and La Fayette's and the others whom

from time to time she had admitted to the brotherhood of her sons, it looked out of place there. Indeed, the governors of the University hesitated long before they wrote it down. To get the consent of the overseers, President Josiah Quincy had to take advantage of the hurry at a meeting which he had summoned without the usual two weeks' notice, and some of the absentees made a protest that the vote was illegal; the foremost of the protestants was the same individual, James Trecothick Austin, attorney-general of Massachusetts, whose protest against the abolition movement provoked the famous first speech of Wendell Phillips in Faneuil Hall. But there was a clear precedent for offering this particular honor to any President of the United States who might come to Cambridge. President Quincy had his way, and did what he thought was right — but what he himself doubtless disliked to do — and on the 25th of June, 1833, Andrew Jackson, of Tennessee, frontiersman, Indian-fighter, and President of the United States, rode past the closed windows of Beacon Street, across the new West Boston Bridge, along the main

street of Cambridge, across Harvard Square, and into the gate.

He was almost too ill to sit his horse, but he rode better than any other of the men on horseback who had been seen there since Washington, and he knew better than Washington himself how to lift his hat to the crowds. His figure, clad in black broadcloth and high stock and tall white hat, was probably the slenderest that ever appeared in a Harvard procession; but ill as he was, his keen and fierce blue eyes, glancing from right to left as he entered, glimpsed, no doubt, the only building that was not in the yard when La Fayette came. That was Dane Hall, the Law School, standing to the right, where the old meeting house had formerly stood; it was nearer Massachusetts then than it is now. Perhaps he saw also, and more clearly than the wits of the day supposed he could, what President Quincy meant by his Latin speech, and what young Francis Bowen, of the senior class, who was to be Professor Bowen, and editor of the *North American Review*, meant by his. The guest did not answer with the Latin speech which Major Jack Downing put into his mouth — "*E pluribus*

unum, my friends, *sine qua non*;" but if he had said precisely those words there would have been a great meaning in his speech, and it would have held together, for it would have been substantially the answer he had just made to the South Carolina nullifiers. He did respond with a few simple words, and with a weary but gentle and sincere courtesy which put to shame such as had come to scoff, and may perhaps have reassured them that the University had not lost its sense of excellence when it honored him.

It was but three years from the time of this half-hearted welcome and genuinely regretful farewell to a day when there could be no question of the heartiness of the welcome, for the hosts and the guests were the same. That was the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the University, the 8th of September, 1836. On that day, the sons of Harvard, numbering with their friends about fifteen hundred, gathered in front of University Hall, marched out through the gate and across the street, and passed between the lines of the undergraduates into the old meeting house, which looked down upon the graves of so many early presidents

and officers and graduates. The orator of the occasion, and its historian also, was President Josiah Quincy, but his sensible and dignified address, given in the formal manner of the time, was without the fire of those speeches in Congress against the annexation of Louisiana which had won him fame as an orator. The most notable incident in the church was the singing of a new song, written for the occasion by a Unitarian minister of Charleston, South Carolina, the Rev. Samuel Gilman, who had spent many of his student evenings in Fay House, not far from the church, drawn thither by a very tender cord. It was the first time the song was ever given, and it was called *Fair Harvard.*

We have a picture of the long procession, ordered by classes, as it wound its way from the church, across the common, past the gate, around Dane and Wadsworth, to a great tent or pavilion on a gentle slope which rises eastward from the yard and on whose crest the president's house now stands. The pavilion was oddly built in tiers or stories of seats, with the speaker's table below and in the

centre. Above, at a great height, a white flag with *Veritas* painted on it floated in the air. The marshal of the day was a young man named Robert Charles Winthrop, and the president of the dinner was Edward Everett, governor of Massachusetts. He had taken the place on short notice, for Harrison Gray Otis, the great master of ceremonies of those days, who had been chosen toast-master, had fallen ill but a few hours before; but there was no lack of readiness, and no sign of any lack of preparation, in Governor Everett's discharge of his function. Indeed, he made it a point never to be unprepared for a public appearance.

Toasts, like prayers, were longer in those days than now, and there were no less than forty proposed, it being the custom for the speaker who responded to one to propose another at the end of his speech. Only one of the entire number was the least bit humorous. Josiah Quincy, father of the president, had in his will bequeathed two thousand pounds to the college in case his son should die a minor, and Dr. J. G. Palfrey toasted "Harvard College, a strangely fortunate yet disappointed legatee,

who in losing ten thousand dollars gained a president." But there was plenty of fun, and that of the most modern quality, in some verses which young Dr. O. W. Holmes read to his elders. The best speeches were probably Everett's and that of another public man whose remarks were not reported at all. We know that other's was one of the best, though we do not know what he said, for when the toast to civil and religious liberty was proposed it was Daniel Webster, an adopted son, who rose to respond. A biographer of the most recent school would doubtless be inclined to dwell on the characteristic fact that Webster, the black sluggard of American history, never found time, as President Quincy tells us, to aid the reporter of his remarks.

The company parted, "to meet at this place on the 8th of September, 1936." They left behind them a sealed box, now in the University Library, which is not to be opened — so their centennial ode reads — until

> "that far day,
> When others come their kindred debt to pay."

It was thirty years later — June 21, 1865 — when the next such memorable procession passed through the College yard. We should have lifted our hats in reverence if we had come upon the line of it. For it marched at a funeral pace, and the music it kept step by was a dirge, at once the mournfulest and the most exultant strain that Harvard's walls have ever echoed with.

The procession must move slowly, for there were halt and fever-stricken men — young men, but veterans — in the ranks. It formed in a hall whose foundations were not yet laid when the pavilion of 1836 was set up on the neighboring slope. From old Gore Hall, the higher, western part of the present library, and the first building to arise in the new quadrangle, it moved out through lines of students and graduates, who in turn fell in behind. Colonel Henry Lee, who had been there in 1836 also, was at the head, after him walked the governor and president and guests and dignitaries, and then, marshalled by classes, the sons of Harvard who had come back alive from the great war for the Union. The procession entered

the old quadrangle at the corner between University Hall on the right and the new Gray's Hall on the left, turned to the right, and passed in front of University, as though it were seeking Appleton Chapel, the new place of worship, but kept on, instead, around the quadrangle, out through the gate, and into the meeting house, where all stood waiting while Bartlett, '62, a major-general at twenty-five, — fittest representative of those whom the occasion was meant to honor, but who could not themselves be there, since they lay dead on Southern fields, for he also had left a leg and an arm behind him, — hobbled slowly down the aisle. One whom Harvard had won from her great rival, Yale, and who has often, like other captives, been set to making music for his captors, was there to direct the singing of new songs, and there was a fitting address; but what is remembered best, though the words are not preserved, is the prayer which a young clergyman, who towered up above all that stood to pray, Phillips Brooks, of the class of 1855, shook out, as was his wont, from his great throat, which was yet too small for the passion of his utterance

— a matchless prayer of resignation and of triumph.

From the church they passed to another pavilion, built this time in the little quadrangle about The Tree, where many speeches were made, and Emerson and Holmes read memorial verses. What then and there was most impressive of all that happened was, however, no spoken word, but the silence of Bartlett, who tried again and again and could not speak. What now is best known was the noblest of all our commemorative poems. We learn from Mr. Scudder's biography — a work which fitly crowns a life too generously devoted to the excellence in other men — that Lowell, of the class of 1838, had written it down two nights before, after months when he could not write a line, and had shown it to Professor Child the next morning, over behind Massachusetts. It may not at once have impressed the hearers greatly, for it demanded an elocution Lowell could hardly have given it. He himself, moreover, was the author of the witticism that the best speeches are always made in the carriage on the way home, and so we are permitted to

think the lines he afterwards added to the Commemoration Ode the best lines in it. For this, Harvard's greatest occasion, did not bring together her greatest sons, but only her worthiest, and Lowell, in the lines written after, reached out westward and brought the foremost figure of those times to be pedestalled on his praise. He turned from the captains with their guns and drums to the silent Lincoln.

We should hear again the same voices, but raised in thanksgiving only, if we should join the procession of 1886, the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding, and enter, through the transept of Memorial Hall, the assembly in Sanders Theatre. But our procession of processions grows too long. Perhaps it will be best to bring the column to an end with another mourning pageant, altogether silent.

To watch this last procession pass, we should but have to take our stand, together with the whole University population, along the driveway through the old quadrangle or on the steps of one of the halls. The quadrangle was complete as one sees it to-day, but on the edge of it

another edifice has since arisen which bears the name of him who that day for the last time passed through it. The day was the 26th of January, 1893 — a gloomy day, and bitterly cold; but officers and students and servants all stood with bared heads while the black hearse and the dark, closed carriages glided over the deep snow, under the leafless, creaking elms. He whom we honored with that silence was the same that prayed Commemoration Day, that many other times had prayed and spoken before the youth of the University: prayed and spoken with a marvellous swift eloquence of words, and with an eloquence of his whole great body, and most of all with the eloquence of his eyes. Of all that ever stood before a Harvard company, he possessed the most of the power that is not intellectual; the power of the passionate love of all mankind. And yet, to one of those that stood to watch his passing, and who remembers well the look in his face whenever he spoke or prayed, the words that seem the fittest to be his record are strangely martial and warlike. They are words like those in the famous entry in the log-book of the flagship at Trafalgar: "Partial

firing continued until 4.30, when a victory having been reported to the Right Honorable Lord Viscount Nelson, K.B., he died of his wounds."

It is to such occasions as these, to such occasions and such men, that Cambridge and one or two other American centres of learning owe in great part their distinction as places. It is such things that principally account for a feeling of pride in our older universities so strong among Americans that with the unschooled it frequently rises into a sort of awe and veneration for those who in various stations and capacities stand for learning. On the other hand, it is true also that a considerable number of Americans, finding themselves equal with no advantage from the higher education to what are commonly called practical affairs, take toward the entire academical class a tone of something like contempt. Now an extravagant homage, now a severe indifference, are attitudes which university folk encounter in their countrymen oftener than any measured appreciation.

I am tempted, therefore, to turn from the central figures in these occasions to that body of teachers and students which has always made a part of the scene, from the spectacles to the constant element among the spectators. For university life in America — I use that word of purpose, instead of academic — has seldom been candidly discussed in any general way; and if we do not exaggerate the importance of the part universities play in our civilization it is a life which ought to be better understood.

Watching processions, doing honor to the great, playing a sort of spectacular and dignified accompaniment to historical movements and events, — such things, no doubt, have made but a small part of the experience of university folk, even at Cambridge. Work and play not strikingly unlike the work and play of other communities, and all the little and big concerns of individual lives everywhere, take up, there also, by far the greater number of men's days and hours. If, however, we look for the distinguishing characteristic of the life, and of them that live it, it will not be altogether misleading to keep

in mind some fancy of a perpetual procession of notables through the place, and of a company always seriously observant of high achievement in any sort, always studious of excellence, whatever form it takes. Such occasions and such men as I have recalled have from the beginning of our nationality brought the University at Cambridge into touch with the principal achievements of Americans and the highest excellence of the American character. But the daily work of the University population also brings it into a steady contemplation of excellence, into a wide cognizance of the best that the entire race has done and thought and said, in all its ages and lands and languages. It would not be a bad description of universities in general, of their work and attitude, to say that they are forever reviewing the displays which from time to time the human spirit has made of its highest capacities; and this is scarcely less true of those departments which devote themselves to the sciences than of those which are busied with literature and the arts.

Moreover, it is a community assembled together, and constantly recruited, by certain pro-

cesses of selection which render it peculiarly susceptible of those very impulses which the study of excellence naturally arouses. A group of men drawn from various quarters by a common devotion to the intellectual life, possessing as a rule more than the average capacity for intellectual work, while each is distinguished by an uncommon familiarity with some one subject or some one department of inquiry, and a mass of youth who, though no great proportion of them may be already given to the things of the mind, surpass as a body the average youth of the country in training and in parts — this, roughly speaking, is from year to year the University's working force. The high practical expediency of such an assemblage cannot be questioned. Its contributions to civilization and to the general welfare are great and manifest; the work of the better representatives of both its groups is far superior to the average performance of Americans; the whole makes steadily for the dignity, the stability, and the beauty of American life. It provides for capable men an unequalled approach to the business of their individual lives; and accordingly no other sort

of place can so often, on its great occasions, justly do honor to its own members and former members. From the ranks of the spectators there constantly emerge some that are fit and chosen to sit in the high seats, to march in the processions before their fellows.

But what of the others? What of the great majority even of this select and favored community? It was for some years a business of mine to keep aware of the lives of Harvard men everywhere, and the records of the daily life of the university from the beginning were open to my view. I could not forbear to see how wide a gulf was fixed between those few of its sons and members who were endowed, and the far greater throng that were not endowed, with the higher sort of competency. I could not but commiserate the greater number for that, however good their lives might be, however blest above the common lot, they were, nevertheless, condemned to be but poor relations to their fellows' greatness. That, no doubt, is a humiliation which we that are not masters in any line must all endure in some relation — if, indeed, along with our incapacity of mastery, we be not also

meanly devoid of any goading aspiration. But to these members of an old and historical brotherhood it is a keener thing than to most Americans, because they are of a closer kinship with masters, and because they have been brought into that serious study of achievement, that close envisagement of excellence, which is the habit and characteristic of their place. If, indeed, there had been set before them in their youth no other spectacle of mastery than that they had in their own masters in their studies, that experience alone might well deny them low and easy ideals; but their studies also, and all the other countless teachings and admonitions and traditions of the place, all its beckoning and waving to their spirits, have turned them toward ideals high and difficult.

Many, no doubt, there are that will not take this bent, but many do, and they it is who have to pay the hardest price of all for that distinction which the whole place enjoys, and make a sacrifice of ease, bootless, perhaps, to themselves, but still an unavoidable condition of those rare benefits which the University confers by the hands of its chosen.

How the unchosen pay the price and offer up their obscure sacrifice, none see completely. It can be reasonably clear only to such as live the life, taking note also of the other lives about them. How in the pursuit of excellence a man may miss such effectiveness as he might otherwise attain, will, I suppose, be clear enough to any. But what it means for the man himself to decline from emulating masters upon some lower effectiveness and competency of his own, if he have not meanwhile lost it, or, if he have lost it, upon some darker depths of disappointment — this may be good food for thought to any that have to do with universities and with youth. Conceive a youth instructed in the true quality of mastery in any sort, and drawn to a straining after it as the chief of his steady desires, but doomed to fall short of it by the limitations of his gifts, or by something in his temperament incompatible with the fullest development and freest use of them, and the vista that conception opens is of a life finely tortured, of a slow, undramatic tragedy worse, probably, than most of the tragedies which swift calamities precipitate.

For it is seldom indeed by any sudden rebuff that such an one is brought to know the truth of himself, and perhaps to take another way of life. Slowly, slowly, by infinite questioning of himself, and testing of his powers, and searching out of the thought of himself in other minds, he learns the truth. He need not rush upon it as a spear in the hands of an enemy; he is quite as likely to encounter it in the forbearances of them that wish him well, to shrink before it mirrored in the friendliest eyes, to writhe for shame of it on the very bosom of compassion.

But once he knows that hateful truth it will confront him everywhere. In the long reaches between those intervals of an unreasoning expectancy which now and then obscure from us all the far less roseate constant vision of our lives, he cannot forbear to exercise upon himself that sure sense of the excellent which he has won from the contemplation of excellence in others. Nor will the pain of it be in great things only, and in momentous failures. Seeing at last that he cannot excel in the great things, that he cannot lead or teach his fellows,

or put by their common tasks to carve them statues, paint them pictures, sing them songs, he will see that in the little things, the common tasks, he falls short also; that in the whole conduct of his life he lacks the grace and power and distinction of consummate men. Perceiving that he cannot greet the masters as a peer, he will likewise divine that he has not winningly accosted the child on the street-corner. When he has borne the agony of finding out that he is but imperfectly adjusted to the universe, he must bear the sharper pain, the meaner humiliation, of dressing that noble sorrow in a cheap and tawdry mourning. This is the cost of the knowledge of excellence to him that has it not.

And he is lucky if the cost is not greater still. It will be well for him if he learn the truth of himself in time; in time, I mean, to fall back upon the tasks that he can do, the life that he can live, and find in these some measure of content. The truth may come to him too late. He may be already launched forth on too wide a sea, progressed too far toward a haven he will never make, to put

back now into any comfortable, snug harbor of commonplace existence. Or he himself may be of such a temper that he will go on, even though he know the voyage to be hopeless. For there are such natures. Few, indeed, will hold out to the very last against those kindly contemptuous restraints and urgencies of nature which draw men back from the self-torturing pursuit of the unattainable. But of these rarely and highly unfortunate lives more, I fancy, take their start in seats of learning than from any other source. They are wretched lives, wherever spent, and few would venture to say that they are right; but none, surely, can consider them ignoble. For my own part, I never can look upon such scenes as those I have been trying to recall without the thought that some too ardent youth may be that moment taking upon him a vow of consecration to a task beyond his powers, an ideal above his nature. I cannot see a monument to any past achievement or departed excellence set up before the eyes of them whose lives are still to shape without an impulse to pluck at the sleeves of the builders, and beseech them have a little care,

lest some not dead, some that gaze and wonder and would emulate, slip in, and be buried also, alive, beneath their marble.

This moralizing, if it be just at all, is applicable to many lives dispersed and separate, and not to those alone which academic places hold throughout their courses. That spirit of aspiration to a genuine excellence once caught, a man will not extinguish it though he wander never so far from where he caught it. Nor will he ever cease from turning backward to that still shining place. He may be of those who, first beholding the radiance of it from afar off, have sought it out, and crowded in, hoping, perhaps, that in some inner circle of its warmth and glow the mystery and secret of mastery might be revealed to them. Or he may be of a class that in distinguished places has always had from me a still more poignant sympathy — the class of the close-at-hand that are not beckoned for; of them that know well the byways and back-doors long before the pillared gates are ever opened unto them. He may be as Cædmon the cowherd was at Whitby before the angel came to him

and bade him sing, or as the little John Richard Green was at Oxford, devotee ere yet he was disciple — not like Gibbon, who, when he was there, was surfeited with too great freedom of the place, and safe from all its awes and threatenings in an immunity which he despised. Shining from afar or towering close at hand, daily bell-call or distant beacon, — it matters not which the place has been to him if once the youth's eyes are dazzled with its light, if once he have taken into his heart its summons to the highest things. Into whatever narrow corner of whatever little world he may be driven, the light, the voice will follow him.

He will not be always Promethean. None turn to husks with such a swinish appetite as they who, denying themselves the common daily bread of humanity, famish for ambrosia. But from his lowest hours of stooping to the actual and possible he will again and again leap wildly up to a renewal of the old, forlorn assault upon the heights he cannot climb. The free competition which is so great a part of our American liberty, the universal opportunity which would seem to imply universal competency, never wears

so harsh a countenance of savage, natural law as when the glory of one man's unsordid effectiveness is reflected in the wistful patience on the face of another who in the fineness of his aspiration, though not of his performance, is brother to him that fortune has adequately dowered. Not one nobly achieves, but many, halt and hampered, dragging their chains of heredity or misfortune, keep pace, step by step, though ever falling behind, with those free strides of his; nor is there any excellence in him but they match it with their pain.

It is, however, in such quiet places of the intellectual life as Cambridge that this phenomenon of the unavoidable but unavailing moth-like immolation of the unchosen is most commonly and constantly to be seen. True, it is but one phase of university life, and one which it may be unduly pessimistic to emphasize. But is it not the obverse of that very shield which universities hold out to our view?

There is more in it than the mere universal survival of the fittest and crushing out of the unfit. For there is something in the silent strife for mastery in studies which seems to rob

men of that restraint and wariness and instinct of self-protection which is half the skill of other, more worldly struggling, and to inspire both fit and unfit with an extraordinary hardihood. Browning did well to take a grammarian for his type of the recklessly indefatigable. For the valor that dares the farthest in the adventure, not of other men's wrath, but of the limits of one's own powers, in overtaxing and overdrafting the subject faculties in one's own will's dominion, there is no such warrior as the academic. None ploughs to victory so long and hard a way; and whether he be merely scholar without mastery, or writer without style, or poet with too thin a note, none fights a losing fight more desperately. Now and then, perhaps, he may take refuge in a chattering pedantry; but my observation is that the deadliest air in the world to pedantry is the air of a true university. Nowhere else will you find failure taken so modestly, so simply. But if the beaten in more resounding strifes assail our sympathy with more tragical downfalls, there can scarcely be, to the discerning eye, a spectacle of defeat more genuinely

pathetic than the slow relaxing of an overstrung mind, the mild sadness of eyes bleared with midnight poring, the makeshift refinements which too often indicate a material accompaniment to the intellectual decline. And this is not the pain of failure alone. There is in it the sting of defeat in competition. For there is need in this strife of the same courage which other men display in other competitions. These men of the quiet walks and studies all have their rivals, detractors, adversaries, whom they must meet with an intrepidity as great as any the law court, the senate, the exchange demands. No keener silent emulation than theirs is anywhere to be observed. On every new-found coast of knowledge they encounter rival explorers. In the dimmest twilight regions of thought they brush against adversaries half-descried. Slow and sedentary though the habit of their lives may be, hedge-birds though they may seem, or mewed as in a barn-yard, with their minds they are forever cleaving the blue and fighting in the air, like eagles.

Let the bravest man of the healthy, normal type of courage be made to understand what

this strife daily demands, what patient waiting and lying in trenches, what lonely, silent watches, what self-containment and self-repression, what overstraining in the time of action, — and what poor spoil there is in victory, what humiliation in defeat, — and it is ten to one that if he be no more than brave he will choose for himself some other set of risks and rewards. The changefulness of Americans and the omnipresence of opportunity make it particularly notable that so many should adhere to this career. Americans, as a rule, must be far along in years before they give over the dream of escaping from their own mediocrity by a change of occupation. There is no word for this but heroism. It puts one in mind somehow of the monuments one finds in many of our cities to the undistinguished and indistinguishable heroism of their youth in the great civil war: monuments inscribed to the nameless, the untraced, or the unreturned dead. Though the fact is not well known in Cambridge, there is a little plot on the slope of Mt. Auburn where the University has given burial to certain of its un-

remembered officers who died in its service, and who lie there, as a simple tablet tells, "facing Harvard College, which they loved." And surely, if the richness of the offering it brings is not the true measure of devotion, a University which so amply recognizes and commemorates achievement does well to honor those unavailing martyrdoms to which for centuries it has sent forth its sons, which so many times have been silently consummated beneath its elms. There is no higher witness than these bear to the potency, the austere charm, of the place; there is no nobler answer to its summons than this meek "adsumus" of the unchosen.

That it should demand this also, and accept it silently, is doubtless in keeping with the character of universities everywhere; but it is also peculiarly in keeping with that hardy civilization from which Harvard has outflowered, with that New England presentment of human nature to which, with all its changes and far-brought accretions, it still essentially conforms. The New England character, though long accentuated in our history, and better

expressed in our literature than any other, has never been adequately portrayed. But it is as distinct in any foreigner's apprehension of the University, or in any American's who is not of New England, as all the other characteristics of the place combined. At first, it may be obscured by much that is of a different tone — by the luxury of the richer youth, by the overindulgence and overcelebration of athletic sports, by many European fashions and usages, by much foreign smartness of intellectual and social habit. But its persistence and its governance of the whole will be finally unmistakable.

Look to the seamy side of what you will, and it confronts you in its least likable aspect — the hard, unsmiling thrift of stony farms and struggling churches and the north sea fisheries. Let yourself go in any boyish enthusiasm, and you will be repressed into matter of fact by some cannily humorous withdrawal. Give too free a tongue to any sympathy, and you will find that if nowhere the intellect is more voluble, the heart is nowhere so silent.

Challenge the mind of your fellow to explore which way you will, and he will companion you with a curiosity as various and lithe as an Athenian's; but invite an interchange of sentiment and the chances are that you will strike him dumb. Translate your emotion into some performance, and it will be better received. Search for the expression of the emotional life of the people about you, and you will find it freer in books and art and deeds than in speech or manner: their benevolence wrought into gifts of stone, their devotion outpoured in lifelong adherence to hard ideals of sacrifice, the tenderness and sweetness of their natures so rarely and shyly disclosed that you may, if you will, go on doubting to the end whether of these qualities they are not altogether devoid — whether, between the merely natural affections and those spiritual elevations for which this strain has a truly Hebraic capacity, there is not a desert waste where the entirely human emotions should be at play. At one moment your doubt is turned to self-reproach by some exemplary thoughtfulness; the next, some

benumbed and benumbing unresponsiveness, some unromantic adherence to the main chance, some perplexing presence of mind at funerals, chills you as if an east wind arose when you had looked for showers and sunshine. You no sooner accede to your disgust at the self-sufficiency which is one form of extreme individualism than you come upon an unsuspected humility, an ice-locked gentleness, in the very nature you thought you had read through. I have heard an Englishman complain of this character that it was impervious, a Scotchman, that it was overcanny, a Latin, on the other hand, that at times it knew not the proper bounds of self-restraint and dignity. All three were right; but all three would very likely agree with an American of another province that it is probably, on the whole, the strongest character, judged by its adequacy to the present demands of civilization, to be found on either continent. How long it will keep its strength under the temptations of its ascendency in wealth and culture — it has never had a political ascendency — is one of the vital problems of our mixed republic.

This character of the New England people still so thoroughly pervades our most ancient university that insensibly the riddle of it mingles with the whole challenge of the place, and accentuates the demand for purpose, for strength and self-control, for excellence embodied in performance. Ambition and sacrifice, curiously uncontrasted, unite in the approved ideal of conduct. If there be any source of effectiveness neglected, it is *le rapport humain*, the understanding of hearts. It would seem preposterous to charge with a want of kindliness a community whose principal activity is the most distinguished service any single community renders to the Republic; but that it neglects to put on daily the aspect of kindliness, that it accomplishes laborious sacrifice more easily than the little priceless offices of good will and friendliness, is a charge too often made to be entirely without foundation. It is deplorable that to so many youths of a childlike expectation of sympathy the entrance into this noble university, which no longer belongs to a province, but is become a great national possession, should be like climbing aboard an iceberg. A thou-

sand lessons will be learned there before that first experience is forgotten. When a thousand benefits have been acknowledged, it may still be unforgiven. Surely, the enlightenment of Athens has no need of the cruel discipline of Sparta.

Cardinal Newman would almost have us believe that the secret of the spell of Athens was in its physical atmosphere. That will scarcely be said of our oldest new-world centre of intellectual life. But there is an indescribable correspondence between its human quality and the setting which it has from nature. There is nothing else so comparable to it and to the society which has produced it as the landscape and the whole physical aspect of New England, and particularly of that long northern shore to which so many Americans make now an annual pilgrimage. That region is at once the least inviting and the most alluring in America. An inhospitable and jagged coast, now cloaked with fogs, now swept by northeast gales, guarding an infertile inland, it is nevertheless threaded with such clear streams, sprinkled with such pure lakes and tender greens and delicate wild

flowers, revealed and hidden with such lights and shadows, as will induce in human kind the hardiest, the most exalted, and the most ecstatic moods. I doubt if any other region in the world can match its high, unproffered entertainment of the spirit. Certainly, no other coast of ours crowns with so rare a loveliness so harsh a strength. None other rivals its baffling charm.